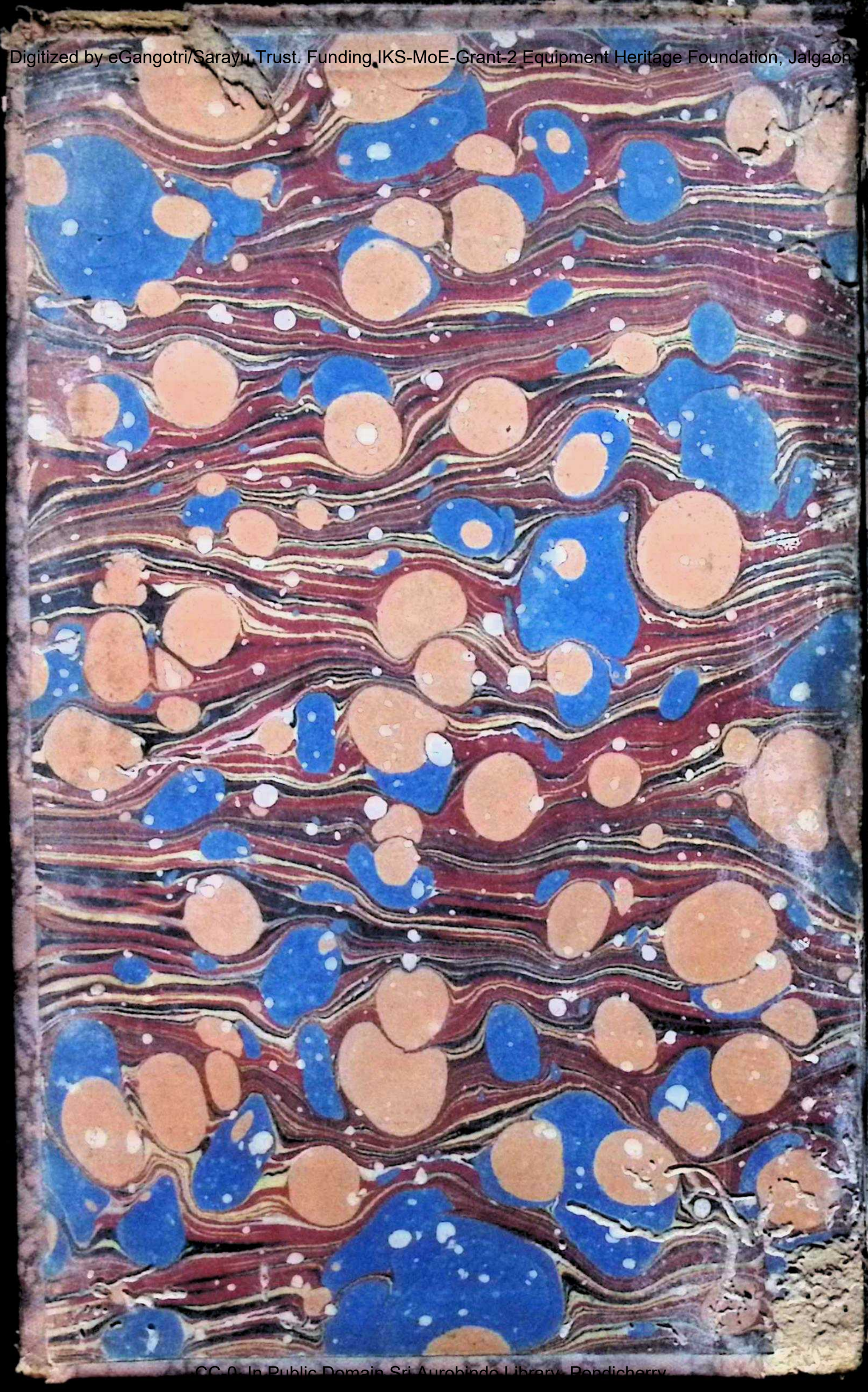

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But thought nor word can seize eternal truth

THE UPPER REACHES OF THE AMAZON

BY

JOSEPH F. WOODROFFE

WITH TWENTY-ONE ILLUSTRATIONS
AND A MAP

METHUEN & CO. LTD.
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First Published in 1914

IN GRATEFUL RECOGNITION
TO THE CREATORS OF ALL THAT IS GOOD IN ME
FOR GREAT PATIENCE
AND FAITH SHOWN IN ADVERSITY
AND THE VERY MATERIAL HELP
GIVEN TO ME IN MAKING POSSIBLE
THE CREATION OF THIS BOOK
ARE DEDICATED
THE FIRST-FRUITS OF MY LABOURS TO
MY PARENTS

J. F. WOODROFFE

PREFACE

IN placing before the public my travels and experiences in the Amazon Valley, I have been largely actuated by the desire to make this obscure region better known.

In doing this, I hope that my attempt will be useful to all classes of our own community, whether they be interested in Banking, Commerce, Religion, or Humanity.

If my few examples of life in general in the dense forests and the deplorable conditions under which crude rubber is extracted to cater to our own tastes in comfort and luxury lead to ameliorated conditions for the rubber gatherers, then I shall feel that my eight years' stay in the Amazon, with its consequent sufferings—mental, moral, physical, and general—has not been wasted.

I am deeply grateful to the Reverend J. H. Harris, of the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society, for his very material help in the publication of my book; to Mr. A. Wilson Hildreth, a well-known North of England writer and lecturer, for his excellent advice and corrections; and my dear friend and colleague, Mr. Alfred Ferreira da Faria, who was for many months my companion in exile, and who is peculiarly well able to appreciate my delineation of conditions in the Amazon Valley. Mr. Faria is well known in journalistic circles in Lisbon and Oporto, his home and birth-place being the latter town.

JOSEPH F. WOODROFFE

February 1914

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INTRODUCTION

THERE is probably no region of the world in which Nature wears so rich and luxurious a garb as in those lowlands through which the mighty Amazon winds her course. Here, in the great primeval forests, trees, in great variety, compete with each other to reach the sunlight; and the rich, thick undergrowth is for ever telling us how prolific Nature is. Insects and birds of rare beauty abound everywhere, and the whole grandeur of the environment is enhanced by the presence of deadly reptiles and members of the feline species. There is no doubt that in the upper reaches of the Amazon, in those vast areas drained by its tributaries, Nature has, wrapped up, untold wonders awaiting the call of the trained naturalist.

Where the scientist with his yearning to increase the sum of human knowledge, at whatever risk to himself, has failed so far to put in an appearance, the worst type of capitalist, with his lust for material gain, has found his way. Two things have attracted him: rubber, and the docility of most of the Indian tribes who inhabit the districts. The Parentintins are one of the very few tribes in the Amazon region who will not submit to the tyranny of the white.

They will attack the rubber establishments in great force, robbing, destroying, and killing in the most ruthless manner. As for the rest, they show an unwilling submission to their white masters. In a country where fish and game are easily obtained, the natives give little attention to agriculture. The inducements held out to such an improvident people by the rubber employers generally succeed, for the native is led to believe that by the expenditure of a little energy he will earn enough money to enable him to purchase an abundance of those questionable luxuries of civilization of which he has already tasted through the "generosity" of his pretended benefactor. Once in the clutches of the agent, working under what is called the peonage system—a thinly veiled form of slavery—he soon learns that his white masters are more cruel than his native climate, with its daily alternating periods of burning heat and intense cold, and more to be dreaded than the most deadly denizens of the forest.

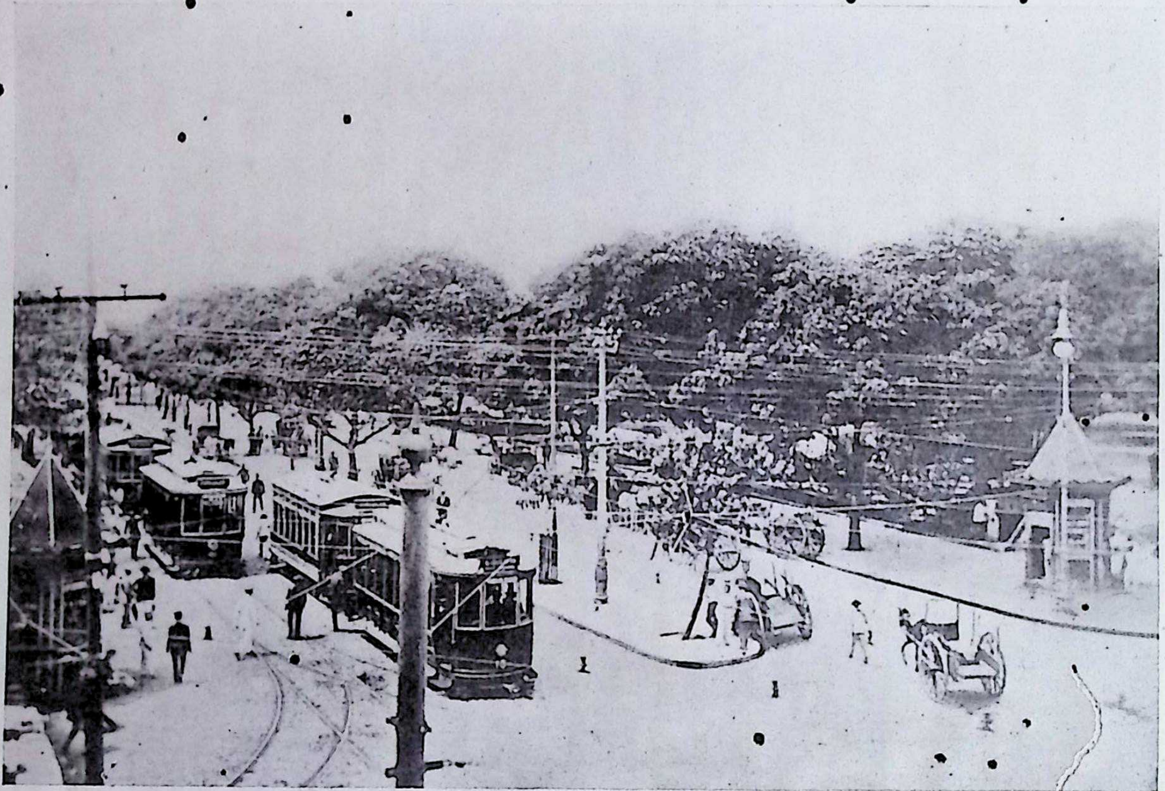
The accounts of atrocities given by the author could be increased many-fold; and the persistent cruelty which characterizes the peonage system is described with great moderation. The perpetrators of these cruel deeds are no respecters of race. Most of them are Peruvians (generally the most brutal) and Brazilians, managing companies registered in England, and financed largely by British capital. Among their victims are men of their own race, Americans, and Europeans of every nationality who have been induced to go out by the idea that they could soon earn enough to enable them to return to the homeland and settle down in a state of moderate comfort. Disillusionment comes to most of them in good time, and with it come despair and all the pangs of outraged manhood. Far away from any town, with no means of communicating with any representative of a civilized Government, cunningly enmeshed in debt by his employers, the white man realizes that, like his coloured brother, he is a slave in every sense of the word, to be used as long as his labour is profitable, and when, from any cause whatever, he can no longer earn his food, to be left to die, far away from home and friends. In my travels over some of the districts traversed by the author I have met men from my own country who had left Portugal only a few years before, left it with the bloom of health on their cheeks, who became physical wrecks, broken in spirit and without the slightest hope of escaping from a system which renders it impossible for them ever to save enough money to take them back home. They have implored me, in the name of God, to warn my fellow-countrymen of what they must expect if ever they venture into that inhospitable region.

Fortunately, the truth of the charges made is not dependent on the testimony of individuals who, like the author, have been to some extent victims of the system. Three years ago, Dr. Alberto Masō, a delegate from the Brazilian Ministry of Agriculture, made a report to his Government. His statements were received with incredulity and with resentment by many Brazilians, who could not believe that any man of their race, or a Peruvian, could be guilty of such deeds of cruelty towards human beings. In a second Report the doctor included a letter from Dr. Francisco Escubar, a member of the Commission of Inquiry and of the Society for the Protection of the Aborigines of Brazil. The letter provided ample proof of the charges made in Dr. Masō's first report.

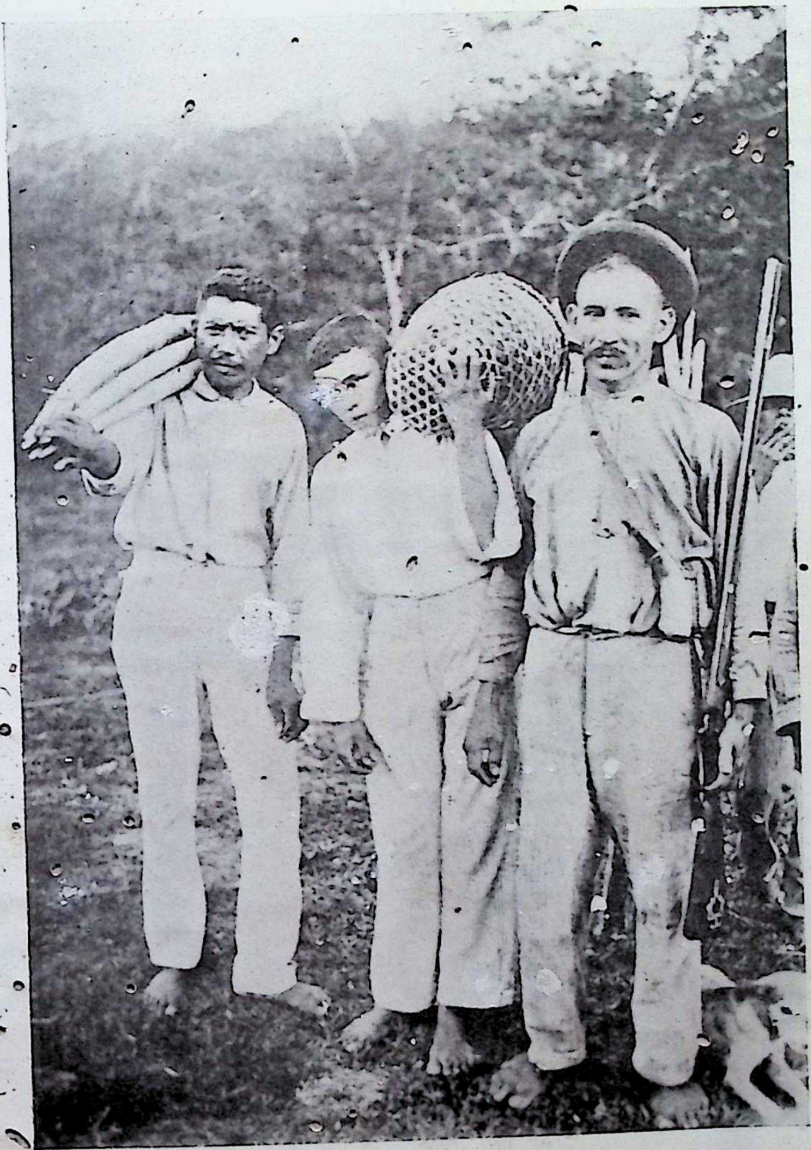
As the friend of the author, and his fellow-worker during a portion of the time he was in South America, I can bear personal testimony to the truth of many of the incidents he relates. Apart from the interesting narrative which he gives of his life and adventures amongst the native Indians, and his descriptions of the leading centres of trade and industry out there, I sincerely hope that this book will be the means of arousing the conscience of the British people to the fact that the deeds described are done under the administration of companies registered in England and claiming British protection, and that in the minds of the victims and of the civilized world outside the Amazon Valley, the honour of England is soiled whenever her name is associated with slavery.

ALFREDO F. DA FARIA

MANCHESTER



A BUSY CORNER OF PARÁ.



TYPES OF BRAZILIAN RUBBER GATHERERS

THE UPPER REACHES OF THE AMAZON

CHAPTER I

LIVERPOOL TO MANAOS

Arrival at Para—Harbour—Port of Para—Visit to shore—Café da Paz—Zoological Gardens—Botanical Gardens—Museum—Cathedral—Consul—Squares and gardens—Bahia de Marajo—Mosquito bites—The Narrows—Birds and animals—Alligators—Rubber gatherers—Woodcutters—Dwellings on banks—Prolificacy of river dwellers—Habits and customs—Santarem—Description, etc.—Rio Tapajos—Obidos—Arrival and description—Itacoatiara—Etymology—Description—Planter's home—Accident to fisherman—Rio Negro—Manaos—Description—Buildings—Streets—Gardens—Local customs—Rubber wareho[illegible]w rubber.

ON 20 October, 1905, I sailed from Liverpool, bound for South America, on the good ship *Madeirense*, of the Booth S.S. Company, commanded by a very clever and popular man, Captain Stoker.

My original intention was to stay in the neighbourhood of the Peruvian town of Iquitos, but, owing to the collapse of the mercantile firm to which I was destined shortly after my arrival in South America, I will endeavour to interest the reader with the story of my adventures as a result of this contretemps, and show how it is always possible to make the most of one's circumstances however difficult.

I had intended to give a description of the voyage and places touched at *en route*, but as in these days of quick and cheap steamers to the coasts of France, Spain, Portugal, and the Madeira Islands, the steamship companies, whose boats ply to these points, make it a rule to issue descriptive pamphlets, I would ask the reader to imagine for himself that after an uneventful voyage we have arrived at our first point of call on the coast of the New World, Salinas.

This, a small port of purely local importance, is at the mouth of one of the many branches which form the delta of the mighty Amazon, the current of whose muddy waters, which we have seen for the last few hours, extend about one hundred miles out to sea.

Arriving off Salinas our attention is suddenly drawn to a small yacht just in front of the steamer and we note a certain activity on the part of the sailors, who we find are preparing to lower a ladder, in order to take on board the pilot who will take the steamer to Para, guiding her through the shallow sand-banks which, owing to their constant shifting, make the entrance to the mouth of the Amazon so dangerous.

A short while after noticing the small yacht, we arrive within hailing distance, and are made aware that a small row-boat is approaching containing several men, one of whom wears a dark blue uniform and braided cap, and, as we have already presumed that he must be the pilot, we take not a little interest in him, perhaps our reason for so doing being a desire to see our first Brazilian, or because we have a small bet with one of our fellow-passengers as to which foot the pilot puts first over the rail.

The bugle having sounded advising us that one of our meals is about to be served, we hurriedly make our preparations, and those who intend to leave the ship at Para have their appetites sharpened now that they see the welcome prospect of an early termination to a voyage which has begun to pall.

Everyone too becomes active, stewards calculating what they are going to make in " tips " from our Para passengers, officers, boatswain and deck hands busy preparing the derricks for the working of cargo, and our passengers bustling with their luggage preparatory to disembarking.

If we have picked up our first pilot at a convenient hour, and have arrived off Para in time to get the visit of the Port Authorities and Customs Officers, we shall be declared in " practique," and on hearing this our Para friends, whose acquaintance has been made during the voyage, will bid us good-bye, leaving us almost immediately to pass their luggage through the " Alfandega," as the Customs House is known in Brazil.

The steamer is now rapidly working her cargo, discharging it into flats. Para at the time of which I am writing did not possess any accommodation for large steamers to discharge or load at the wharf, but to-day the engineers have made the Port of Para one of Brazil's best ports.

The boat not being due to leave Para for Manaos for several days, and the heat on board being so oppressive, I will now try to describe to my readers the city of Para (or Belem do Para, which is its proper name) as I saw it on the day of my arrival in November, 1905.

Several of our passengers who were continuing the voyage to Manaos, which was also my destination, invited me to join a shore-going party to visit Para in order to stretch our limbs and accustom ourselves to the land again.

The preparations being complete, we furnished ourselves with a supply of Brazilian money, and got on board the first available launch for the shore. Our party was a merry one, comprising as it did some seven Englishmen and two English ladies.

Arriving off the port we noticed the presence of many large black birds on the roofs of the warehouses, which, so I afterwards learned, are called "urubus" by the Brazilians, and are known in natural history as *Cathartes foetens.*

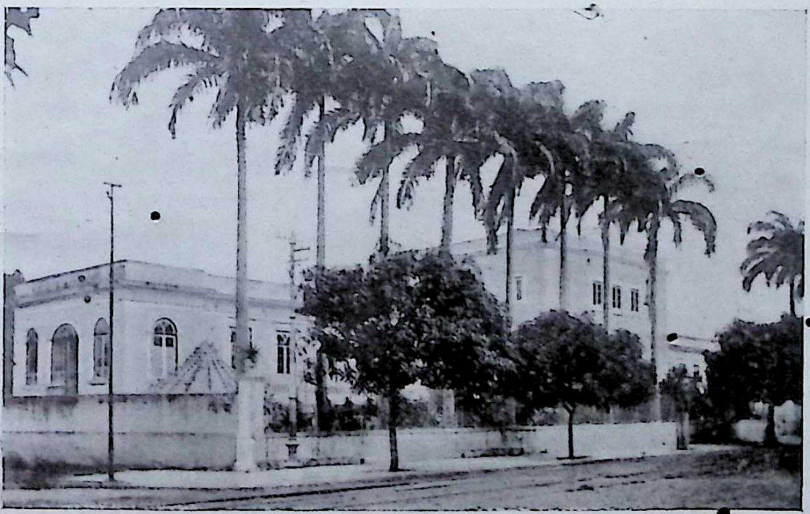
These ugly birds are of inestimable value in the cleansing of the towns, markets, etc., as they are scavengers, rapidly consuming carrion and offal. They are protected by the authorities, the slaughter of one being an indictable offence, which as a rule incurs severe punishment.

Arriving at the steps in order to disembark, we decided to hire carriages, a decision very quickly acted upon. Owing to the effect of the hot pavement on our feet, and to a severe thirst resulting from our twenty minutes or so in the launch, we ordered the Brazilian Jehu to drive us to the "Café da Paz." This magnificent restaurant at that time had a very pretty and well-shaded garden, where we were served with cooling drinks and light refreshments.

It was here that I got my first view of South American flora, a very pretty creeper with pink and white flowers, in shape like a bell, particularly drawing my attention. The other members of the party becoming interested, we also found some very pretty specimens of red passion flowers, and it was arranged as a result of our discoveries to visit the Zoological and Botanical Gardens, where one may see specimens of most of the known flora and fauna of Brazil and its near neighbours. There is also a very fine Natural History Museum, whilst the Indian Museum must be one of the most perfect of its kind in the world.

After visiting the Gardens and Zoo, in the cool of the afternoon we drove through the town and greatly admired the really beautiful little gardens and squares with which

THE BARRACKS, PARÁ



THE HOSPITAL, PARÁ

it was well supplied, thereby lessening one's unpleasant impressions of the narrow and dirty streets of the old town.

We did not visit the Cathedral, dedicated to "Nossa Senhora de Belem" (Our Lady of Bethlehem), though this old and dilapidated church well repays a visit, but on a later occasion I was able to spend several very profitable hours there.

After passing two days and nights on shore, visiting the English Consul and several of our friends and fellow-passengers, we returned to our steamer, which was preparing to leave for Manaos, the last stage of our journey with her.

Preparations for our departure being complete, we left Para at a convenient time to arrive during daylight at the entrance to the "Bahia de Marajo," where navigation is very difficult and dangerous to craft of all kinds; but, owing to the fast falling night, nothing of interest was to be seen, so after dinner we amused ourselves with a game of bridge, and after our usual nightcap retired to our berths, I to quickly fall asleep, for I was thoroughly exhausted with my exertions during the day.

On being awakened by the steward with my cup of tea about 6 a.m., I quickly prepared my ablutions and discovered upon looking at the mirror that my face was covered with raised red blotches about the size of a sixpenny piece, and thinking it might be due to some sort of vermin, I proceeded to make a search.

While occupied in this way my cabin companion made his appearance, having been on deck for a refresher. He asked me how I had slept, and then informed me that he had passed a very restless night through the presence of mosquitoes, which had attacked his lower limbs in exactly the same way as my features. They had been able to bite his legs, for they had become exposed in his attempts to cover his head with the sheets.

I had not been quite so fortunate, for on account of the heat I had thrown myself on top of my berth, dressed only in pyjamas, and quickly realized that very little of my anatomy had escaped the bites of these pests. For quite three weeks afterwards I suffered great pain and trouble due to rubbing and scratching the irritated parts, which unfortunately from some cause became infected. Therefore I warn any of my readers who decide to visit a district where these fiendish pests abound to protect themselves if possible, but, above all, don't scratch. A little ammonia is usually sufficient to reduce any irritation.

Just before 8 a.m. I went on deck to seek fresh air, and was surprised to find that we were in a part of the river where the banks were so close together that we appeared to be on some small canal.

On expressing surprise and admiration of the very pretty view, one of the officers told me that we had entered that part of the Amazon known as the " Narrows," one of the most interesting parts to be seen throughout the length of the river from Manaos to Para, a distance of nearly one thousand miles.

Here one gets an admirable view of the river banks, and the forest full of beautiful flowers, trees in bloom and foliage of all shades, while parakeets fill the air with their screeching and the movement of their wings, so big are the flocks of these exquisitely coloured little creatures.

Then again our attention is drawn to flashes of bright colours in the shade, caused by overhanging trees, and we are delighted to see the magnificent kingfishers with which the rivers abound, making their repeated dives in search of food.

Macaws, toucans, and Amazon parrots continually fly across our bows, while herons, storks, and smaller water birds take flight at the noise of our approaching steamer and seek seclusion higher up the river, only to repeat the performance as we again draw near.

Alligators, resting on the low banks or in some backwash, observe our passing with unconcern, and as our captain prohibits shooting from the steamer (a wise precaution, owing to the presence of habitations on the river bank) we must needs restrain our natural desire to assist in the war of extermination waged against these ugly and dangerous reptiles.

The whole of the extent of these winding narrows is well populated by rubber gatherers, also woodcutters, who sell the product of their labours to the local launches and steamers which require this kind of fuel.

Their houses are built on piles in small clearings close to the river banks, and one remarks the absence of cultivation for even the most moderate domestic requirements, a characteristic of most river dwellers on the Amazon and its tributaries.

We marvel at the number of children who present themselves to our view in all stages of dress and undress, and of all ages, from a few days to the budding wife, or, as in some cases, actual mothers in their early teens. Tiny tots, both boys and girls, of at most three or four years, will embark in the canoes tied up close to the houses, and paddle out in our direction, to be tossed about by the wash of the steamer, their object being to prevent the swamping of their canoes while tied to the banks. The suction caused by the displacement of water might cause the canoes to break away from their insecure moorings, an event which would be something in the nature of a catastrophe for these poor folk.

After leaving the Narrows, the passage of which accounts for about eight hours of our time, the first point of any interest to be seen is the port of Santarem, beautifully situated on high ground with a pretty white beach, on the right bank of the River Tapajos, and just at its mouth. The population is about one thousand. This town is inhabited by Southerners, who left the States just after the victory of the North in the terrible struggles of the Civil War.

Although the steamer passes at a distance it is a town to which one's attention is drawn, for there is something striking in the appearance of the houses and other buildings which makes it quite unique. Its streets, which are well and regularly made, have boarded walks, while the roads are of sand clay. We recognize the construction of the houses as the style adopted by the planters during the days of negro slavery in the States.

A very pretty church dominates the little town, and the whole forms a study in black and white which one cannot forget, and on the many occasions that the author has seen it his original impression remains.

Several of the inhabitants, descendants of the founders, still speak a little English, but, of course, owing to intermarriage with foreign blood, the majority of them are almost indistinguishable from the general run of people inhabiting the lower portions of the Amazon.

These have adopted the habits of the river dwellers, and pursue the same occupations of fishing, cultivation, and trading as do the natives.

Descent from a high type, however, may be seen in their handicraft, in the making of boats and the decorating of calabashes, in which the people of Santarem have made a very lucrative trade. There is a small daily rise and fall of the river, the ocean's tides making their presence felt even up to this point. Santarem was known to the Portuguese early in the seventeenth century.

Some time after leaving Santarem we arrived off the port of Obidos, situated on high ground on the left bank of the main river. The village consists of a few straggling lines of ill-built and unkempt houses, without any pretence to architectural importance.

It is a small military post, and has a fort, built about 1840, in which I found some very old muzzle-loading cannon, but could not ascertain their age. Some were lying half covered with rank grass and creepers, others maintained a very precarious balance on the crumbling walls. It seemed a pity that owing solely to a want of attention a place which could be made very picturesque should be left to hide itself from view, in a maze of climbers and undergrowth, the haunt of bats, spiders, and lizards.

I mentioned this to the young lieutenant who had been good enough to call our attention to this antiquity, and he quite agreed with my remarks, but said that though he had the time and means at his disposal to counteract the decay, he could not see that anything could be gained, as he would very likely only be attached to the post for a month or two, and his relief would probably allow tropical nature to have her own way again.

This I found in later years is characteristic of most South Americans, at least those with whom I came into contact in the countries which I have visited. They will plant small crops, but only of such plants as beans, mandioc, ground nuts, and other quick producers; if it is suggested that they plant trees for shade, fruit, etc., which require years for their development, they will most assuredly answer you to the effect that they would as likely as not be unable to receive any benefit from them, and that they would be working merely that others might reap the fruits of their enterprise.

As an illustration of their line of thought I will give as an example a case, one of many, that came under my notice.

Seringueros or rubber gatherers often plant bananas, etc., for their own use, but upon leaving for new ground they will not allow to remain for the benefit of others any single useful plant, but will cut and burn everything, even to the miserable hut they vacate.

However, while I have been digressing we have again arrived off a place which deserves attention. This is the village of Itacoatiara, on the left bank of the river, which at this point is noticeable for the very high and rocky banks from which the village gets its name, signifying in the Guarani language "colouring or painting stone." This stone was, and is even to-day, used by the local inhabitants in the colouring of pottery, the adorning of their bodies, and, mixed with water, as limewash for their houses.

Just outside the village is a very fine plantation of tobacco, cocoa, rubber, and other useful plants and trees covering very many acres. It is the property of one of the American Southerners who left the States owing to the American Civil War, and though now a great age has never returned. He has been very successful in the planting and opening up of his estate, and has a great demand for tobacco grown and cured, under his personal supervision, by the same process as that in vogue in his young days in his own country.

The planter's house is well made and the grounds and avenues well planted with profitable trees and fruits, which afford protection from the heat of the sun, and give everything a charming, almost European appearance.

We left this town after a stay of some three hours, necessitated by our putting ashore an unfortunate fisherman who, during the early hours of the morning, had accidentally been run down by our steamer while crossing the river in a boat with his companion, which latter was thrown into the water by the impact and never seen again, though a very diligent search was made.

Eight hours after leaving Itacoatiara we arrived at the mouth of the Rio Negro, about 9 p.m., and about two hours afterwards dropped anchor off the port of Manaos, the turning point of our steamer.

Everyone on board was now quite excited, and very few of us turned into our bunks, being too full of calculations for the morrow. Along with several others, I took advantage of the beautiful night to play cards till 6 a.m., when accounts were made up and debts paid with the appearance of the sun.

About 8 a.m., while we were at breakfast, we received the visit of the authorities, who after the usual formalities declared the ship free to go alongside the wharf to discharge her passengers.

The wharf and floating docks at Manaos were a great improvement on the mode of disembarking pursued at Para, and with very little noise and excitement we were quickly alongside, and our heavy luggage taken in charge by the Customs Authorities, who transferred it to the "Alfandega." After saying good-bye to the officers, and expressing our thanks to our genial commander, Captain Stoker, for our safe arrival, we took our leave, carrying our hand-bags containing a few requirements, to serve us until such time as we could clear our luggage from the Customs.

As I had now finished only the first portion of my journey, I went, along with several others, to the Steamship Company to inquire about the sailings for Iquitos.

We ascertained that we had a wait of about twelve days in prospect, when the s.s. *Javary* would be due, and as the company offered us the use of one of the large lighters which the steamers tow up to Iquitos, in order to accommodate passengers and the goods in transit from the States, we naturally accepted, and were rowed to where she was moored in mid-stream.

On arrival we found that she was a flat-bottomed ship with two masts, fitted up very much like a house-boat, having good cabins, baths, lavatories, etc., fore and aft, and a large open deck space for games and promenading, making an excellent spot for our daily siestas in chair or hammock.

During the afternoon, after our baggage had been inspected, it was sent on board the lighter, to which I had been induced to retire early, owing to a very fatiguing morning, and the prospect of visiting the town the following day.

After having become accustomed to the vibration of the steamer, it was long before I could induce Morpheus to visit me, but eventually I fell into a doze. It hardly seemed a minute before the crew of our boat, who were all of them Portuguese, disturbed me with their preparations for scrubbing down decks. I tried to make the best of it, but a few moments after 6 a.m. the sun was shining upon me with a force which made sleep impossible, so after a bath and fine cold shower, as no meals were served on board the lighter, I dressed and went on shore for my coffee, where all meals had to be taken until the arrival of the steamer *Javary*, which would carry the passengers to Iquitos.

The landing pier is really a floating dock or wharf built on buoys. It is a fine piece of work with an approach to the town consisting of a small cable track, carriage and footways.

On reaching the gates leading to the streets I found myself in a large square, or "praça," as it is called in Portuguese, on the side of which directly facing the wharf is the cathedral, a very pretty square edifice with two small towers used as belfries. The church is situated on an eminence, and is completely surrounded by beautiful gardens and trees. It is reached by several flights of fine marble steps, making a very imposing picture.

From the same square begins the principal street or "avenida" of the town.

This is a very fine thoroughfare, lined on either side with splendid trees.

Rising from the square, the avenue slopes gently up to the highest part of the town, and at the extreme end are the Courts of Justice, whilst directly in front of this building is the "Teatro do Amazonas." This luxurious edifice is built on fine stone terraces, with castellated walls, topped with gardens, which provide excellent opportunities for a "cooler" during the intervals of a performance.

The building, carried out in finely worked white stone, is of almost barbaric splendour, without and within; its green, yellow, and golden dome being visible from almost all parts of the city. The interior, with its walls covered with fine paintings, frescoes, and tapestries, and its rich upholsterings of green, yellow, and gold, the Brazilian national colours, is not to be compared with any other theatre I have seen.

In front of the theatre is a fine square with a monument dedicated to the "Amazons," whilst the square itself, paved with tiles in mosaic designs worked out in red, white, and black, is quite unique in Amazonian cities.

Manaos being one of the most modern towns of Brazil, and at this time exceedingly rich, possesses many fine buildings, among the most prominent of which are the Gymnasium, Schools, Biblioteca or Public Library, and the Police and Military Barracks, but in odd contrast is the Palace of the Governor of the State, an insignificant little building hidden away in a corner in the worst part of the town.

Manaos possesses well laid out gardens, a good service of electric cars, good water supply, electric light, fine shops and public markets, where meat, fish, fruit, vegetables, etc., are obtainable at not very extortionate prices. In every street one finds jewellers' shops, with fine displays of jewellery and precious stones, among which diamonds predominate, it apparently being every Brazilian's ambition to possess one of these stones; even junior clerks with frayed shirt-cuffs and boots in poor condition will be seen wearing rings valued at £40 to £100, bought at the expense of much self-denial, when not bought on credit or won in raffles or lotteries. One is pestered at every moment with the vendors of tickets for lotteries run by the State, and raffles organized by some person who desires to dispose of a trinket, in order to buy something else.

The hotels and restaurants in Manaos are clean and the service good, and, taking everything into account, the charges are reasonable, a good class hotel providing rooms and service for £1 per day, and three meals daily, i.e. coffee, lunch, and dinner, at an average of £10 per month. Wines are, of course, extras, while nothing but a small roll is allowed with the morning coffee.

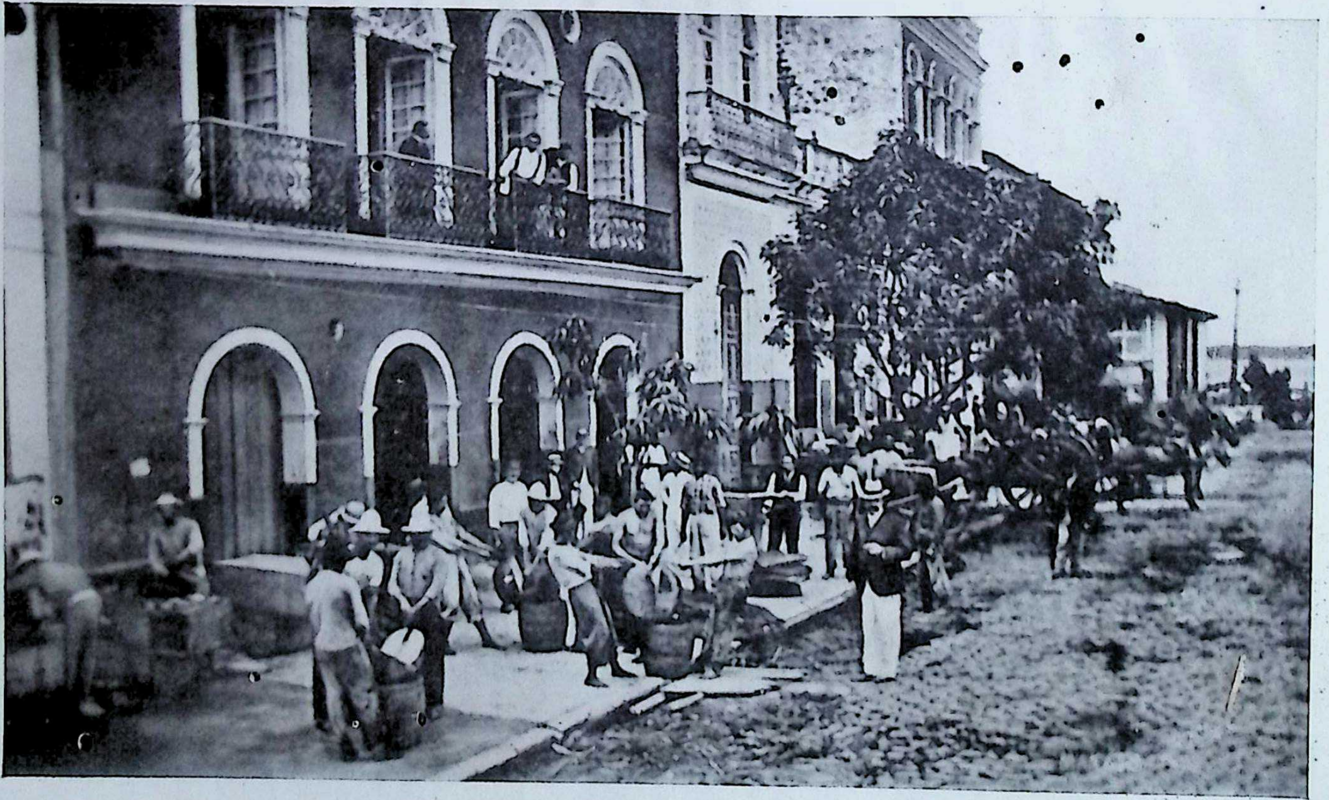
Cafés are abundant, being run on the French style, but liquor is a very expensive item, as the reader will observe by turning to the last pages of this book. The town is well policed, and both police and military are always to be seen in clean uniforms, even though sometimes slightly the worse for wear.

Ladies, in the ideal sense of the term, are conspicuous by their absence, their place being taken by women of all nationalities, mostly Polish Jewesses, attracted to the town by the prodigality of its male inhabitants, who among the wealthy rubber merchants will gladly make presents to these women of jewellery worth hundreds of pounds, in order to gratify their whims; and, when these men are in the town, it is a common thing for them to run up huge debts with their agents, and to engage in riot and debauchery, until, broken down in health, or saddled with debts which oblige them to stay in the rivers sometimes for several years, and in the greater number of cases even mortgage their properties to cover the advances made to them by the financiers, they eventually pass out of sight in absolute ruin, in which others are obliged to share.

It was here that I saw for the first time rubber in its raw state, that is to say, as it is exported from Manaos. Passing one of the warehouses close to the landing-stage, I observed a very bad odour, only comparable to that of a decomposing body, and noticed that part of the pavement was covered with greyish grubs, of from less than an inch to about two inches long. While examining these repulsive creatures, the doors of the warehouse were thrown open, and I saw men preparing to weigh large balls of what I intuitively recognized to be rubber. I stayed to watch them at work.

Two men furnished with sharp-pointed hooks such as are used by dock labourers when handling cargo, drove them into opposite parts of a ball of rubber, while a third was busily engaged in sharpening a knife about thirty inches long, on a long narrow strip of sanded board held in his left hand.

The ball being suspended, a few cutting movements dissected it, all inferior grades were cut out or separated with the hooks, while a staff of labourers occupied themselves in carrying the rubber to trucks and thence to the platform scale, where it was weighed and the weights noted by an assistant. It was then carried to another quarter of the room, packed into cases by a small gang employed in casing and marking, ready for the subsequent transportation to the docks.



PACKING AND GRADING RUBBER AT MANAOS

CHAPTER II

HISTORY OF THE AMAZON

Amazon: origin of the word—Its application—Discovery—History—Voyage to Iquitos—A queer boat and its occupant—Life on board—River Purus—Cattle—Mandioc—Farina—How prepared—Its uses—River Javary—Frontier posts—Officers—Iquitos in 1905—Arrival—First impressions—Hotels—Sickness—Diphtheria—Christmas festivities—Incidents—Edifices, streets, and amusements—Houses—Dirty practices—Pigs as scavengers—Water supply—Railway—Wharf: unloading and loading cattle—Lighting, inhabitants, and trade.

BEFORE continuing the narrative it would be well to give a short account of the River Amazon, from such information as we are able to gather from those who have written on the subject.

The word itself is derived, according to some writers, from the Greek legend which tells of a body of young women warriors who had their right breasts amputated so that they would be better able to carry, and protect themselves with, the shields and other implements of war.

Diodoro de Sicilia applies this name to the heroines of Cappadocia who inhabited the borders of Thermodon, sixteen hundred years before the birth of Christ, and who conquered parts of Asia Minor. Others apply the word to African women warriors who, bound to one another by oaths of chastity, fought in their battles while secured in pairs by belts or chains; but, however that may be, literature, generally speaking, has accepted the word itself to mean "a woman of manly bearing, brave and fearless; one who rides a horse and fights." This is according to Delille, Balzac, Th. Gautier, and others.

In some histories of the eighth century it will be found that a body of women soldiers were used by Wlasta, a young Tcheca who built fortifications on Mount Widowe, and for eight years fought the Duke of Przemyslas, of which statement there does not appear to be any reason for doubt.

How the Amazon River itself came to be so called is, however, a matter of conjecture, for there is little proof; but from such proofs as do exist the name appears to owe its origin to the transplanting of an Iberian legend to the largest estuary of the world, discovered in 1499–1500 by Vincente Pinzon, before Pedro Cabral in command of a Portuguese squadron made his appearance there, and named it the "Fresh Water Sea," and before the celebrated Spaniard Orellana made his famous journey from Ecuador to the Atlantic coast by way of the River "Napo" and the Queen of Rivers.

The Amazon is supposed to be the "El Dorado" of the sixteenth century, when its reported discovery startled the whole of Europe and caused the fitting out of fleets for its further exploration. Among these was the one commanded by Christopher Columbus, who set sail whilst his brain was fired by the chimeras of the period which served him in place of geography, and although in search of a mysterious land beyond the seas of Ethiopia, he was impeded in his proposed itinerary by the South American continent, which effectively barred his way, and in this accidental manner he discovered it. Glowing reports sent home by travellers very soon gave the district a place amongst the world's great marvels.

According to Baraõ de Sant' Anna Nery, in his work *The Land of the Amazons*, translated from the French by George Humphrey, we find the following :—

" There existed somewhere or other a country traversed by a white sea whose waves rolled over sand of gold and beach of diamonds. Its capital, Manoa, was a great city full of palaces, some built of stones riveted with silver, whilst the roofs of others were tiled with plates of gold—one trod everywhere on most precious metals. Manoa was the storehouse of all the riches of the earth. There reigned a man called the Golden One (El Dorado in Spanish), for his body scintillated with golden sequins even as the sky with stars."

Stories such as these inflamed the imagination of men like Gonzalo Pizarro (brother of the conqueror of Peru), who, with a band of adventurers, started from Peru in the year 1539, travelling overland by way of Quito, the capital of Ecuador.

Here he acquired the services of a soldier of fortune, Francisco de Orellana, whom he made his lieutenant, and the party set out to discover El Dorado, the avowed intention of Pizarro being to possess the golden armour of its king.

The expedition, however, was naturally unsuccessful, and after months of travelling through the bush and living only upon what they could obtain in the jungles and forests, they were obliged to discontinue, and having been able to pick up during the journey certain quantities of virgin gold, they gave it into the care of Orellana, who hid it on board a small ship, and, getting together a body of men, he abandoned the rest of the expedition. He started to sail down a small river, which turned out to be what is known to-day as the Napo, Pizarro himself returning to

Quito without any success to report. Orellana, however, after many vicissitudes did reach the Amazon and afterwards the Atlantic, successfully getting his treasure to Spain, and upon describing his voyage down the Napo he asserted, and was believed, that, among the innumerable adventures of the expedition, they had been attacked all the way by women warriors with fair hair, who were savages, a story due perhaps to his imagining to be women the Amazon Indians, who wear long hair, and, in many cases, as for example the Yahuas of the Napo, wear both capes and skirts of grass.

In our own country, during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, expeditions were fitted out to discover the marvellous El Dorado, among them being the one headed by the favourite of the Queen, Sir Walter Raleigh, who, along with most people of the time, believed in its existence.

He sailed for South America on 5 February, 1595, and after taking the island of Trinidad from the Spaniards he arrived at the mouth of the Orinoco, which he ascended. Here he got into communication with some of the Indian tribes who inhabit its dense forests, and from what he learned from them he became convinced of the existence of the "City of Gold." He also was unsuccessful, the expedition becoming weakened owing to sickness and deaths among the crew, and to the fact that he had to leave some of his men to garrison the conquered island of Trinidad.

Returning to England in 1597, he wrote a description of his travels, containing much that was true and much that was purely fantasy; among the latter being his description of his meeting with the Amazons and other fanciful creatures of the imagination.

In this he was not alone, for all writers and travellers of the period could not resist the desire to romance after their journeys of discovery, and for this reason the idea of a country within the mighty river guarded by females who lived emancipated from the power of man, were worked upon and varied by each one to suit his fancy.

Legions of adventurers seeking new ground and riches, scientists dominated by the desire to wrest from the country its secrets, have visited it and travelled through it since the time of Orellana and the Jesuit missionaries Acuña (1698), Fritz (1717), and others, and that great man of the eighteenth century, Humboldt (1799).

Although scientific and commercial interest was maintained, no prominent works were published until the Amazon was visited by representatives of geographical and scientific bodies, and notable scientists such as Van Spix and Van Spartius (1817–20); Wallace and Bates (1848–9), Luis Agassiz (1866), Chandless (1878–80), and Stradelli (1889), and admirable though their works are, none compare with that of Baron Sant' Anna Nery, the great Brazilian writer, whose death was much lamented.

The Amazon River, the largest body of fresh water in the world, rises in the Andes close to the town of Huanaco in Peru, its birthplace being the Lake of Lauri Cocha, a Spanish corruption of the Quechua words "Yauri Cocha"; from here, augmenting in volume, it passes through the high mountain valleys, increasing in muddiness as it flows from south to north, in which direction it continues until arriving at a point where it flows through two huge walls of rock (after receiving the waters of the River Santiago) forming the rapids called Pongo Manseriche, from whence its course abruptly changes to the east, which is continued until its arrival at the ocean.

During its length it is known by three names: Marañon, from its source to the mouth of the Napo; Solimões (pronounced Sol-ee-mo-ens, the last syllable having a nasal sound) until it reaches the River Negro; and Amazonas from the River Negro to the mouth.

The Iquitos steamer having now arrived at Manaos, I began preparations for the journey.

After making necessary purchases I went on board our "house-boat," and, while we were waiting to be taken in tow, an Englishman appeared, seated in a crazy boat, almost square, and made apparently out of a biscuit box or other similar packing-case.

The man was almost naked, his clothes worn to shreds, and his skin burned to the colour of a boiled lobster. Hailing our craft, he asked if we were short of a sailor, to which we could only reply by informing him that we were passengers, and that he must apply to the captain.

We asked him what he had been doing, when he surprised us by saying that he had deserted his ship at Iquitos, and had come this great distance in his crazy skiff, begging his food on the way. He asked the steamer's officers for work, but they could not accede to his request, though we learned later that the man's story was true in every respect.

This incident influenced me considerably later on, when I had occasion to make long journeys in canoes, for, when overtaken by storms, and inclined to be anxious, I always compared the stability of my canoe with this poor devil's water-logged apology for a boat.

Everything now being ready for our journey to Iquitos, we were made secure to the side of the steamer *Javary*. Then commenced (on 26 November, thirty-seven days after our departure from Liverpool, the last stage of our journey in ocean-going steamers, and we were quickly at the mouth of the Rio Negro, again navigating the mighty Amazon.

During the afternoon, when the ship had been cleaned, derricks made secure, and the routine of the crew established, we made the acquaintance of our commander, Captain Dale, Commodore of the Iquitos Steamship Fleet, who entertained us with some of his impressions of Iquitos and the Amazon, acquired during the great length of time which he had spent on this particular run, which, if I remember rightly, was some twenty years.

Our passengers, twelve in number, were all English-speaking people, ten of us having travelled from Europe, while the others were a Peruvian gentleman and a young American lady who had travelled from New York to take charge of and educate three Peruvian children at some distance above Iquitos. This lady was, however, soon on her way back to the States, as a result of her complaints to the U.S.A. Consul respecting overtures made to her by her employer, a well-known Peruvian, and father of her pupils. I mention this only as a deterrent to young Englishwomen who might receive inducements to take up lucrative positions as governesses or companions in South America, and particularly outside the cities, where their hopes of getting protection are practically nil.

On 27 November we passed the River Purus, which enters the Amazon on its right bank. We began to notice here the increased number of villages and habitations on the river banks, most of them in moderately large clearings, in which cattle, sheep, goats, etc., could be seen, while on the high banks on either side the trees which produce the "Brazil nut" were shown to us by our Peruvian friend, who also informed us that the district was devoted mainly to the collection of the nut, cattle-raising in a small way, turtle-fishing, and also the production of farina in large quantities, this last being one of the staple articles of food in the Amazon valley. It is a product of the "mandioca," a large root of the genus *Manihot aypi*. When in its raw state, and even when roasted or boiled, it is very poisonous, containing hydrocyanic acid in large quantities. It is very often mistaken for the edible variety of the same plant (*Manihot utilissima*), from which it cannot be distinguished until partaken of, with results which I have often known to become fatal. It is one of the worst of vegetable poisons known. This danger is overcome in the making of farina in the following manner: The roots are collected and then placed in troughs which contain water, in which they are allowed to remain until they begin to rot. When this occurs, they are relieved of their outer skins and placed in baskets, when they are carried to the grating machine. This is generally a round piece of timber about six inches in diameter, and twenty inches long, in the extremes of which short pieces of iron or steel are driven to serve as axles. It is covered with perforated tin, with the rough edges of the punctures outside, or short pieces of strong wire are driven in, causing the drum to resemble the music cylinder of a barrel organ.

This primitive mill is secured to a stand of a pattern not unlike those used for mounting a grindstone, a cord or leather rope passes to a grooved wheel, about four feet in diameter, which when turned with a handle causes the smaller wheel or grater to revolve at great velocity, on exactly the same principle as the gear of a bicycle.

The root as it is grated falls into troughs or pans placed underneath the grater, which as they become full are carried away to the presses, where the grated mass is deposited, and subjected to great pressure until free from liquid.

This as it flows from the presses is retained in special receptacles, where it remains until such time as it is required to undergo a special process, necessary for the separation of the starch and the production of a kind of tapioca, and also to set free the volatile poison.

When all the moisture has been forced out of the roots, the resultant mass is taken to large flat open pans, under which a strong fire is made, and toasted, whilst it is continually tossed into the air with paddle-shaped instruments. When ready it is placed in baskets, wide at the mouth and narrow at the base, which have already been lined with broad leaves, and when filled are placed in pairs, mouth to mouth, covered with coarse canvas or sacking and stitched, the whole then assuming the shape of a long narrow barrel. Each pair of baskets as a rule contains about thirty kilos. of farina, and is sold by the producer to the traders at about seven shillings, while the consumer sometimes has to pay as much as forty-five, according to distance from the source of supply.

After several days' journey, without seeing anything of interest, beyond the animal and bird life, which by now hardly interested us, we arrived off the mouth of the River Javary, and in about an hour's time we anchored at the Brazilian frontier station of Tabatinga, and were shortly afterwards boarded by the officers in charge.

I had time to observe that this place was well fortified and had a large garrison, the barracks of the troops being a large rambling stone building, well whitewashed and picked out with black window frames and doors. It appeared to be a pleasing place, but unfortunately no opportunity presented itself for going ashore.

Ten minutes or so after leaving Tabatinga, we again dropped anchor; this time at the Peruvian frontier town of Leticia, thus passing out of Brazilian territory, and obtaining our introduction to Peru.

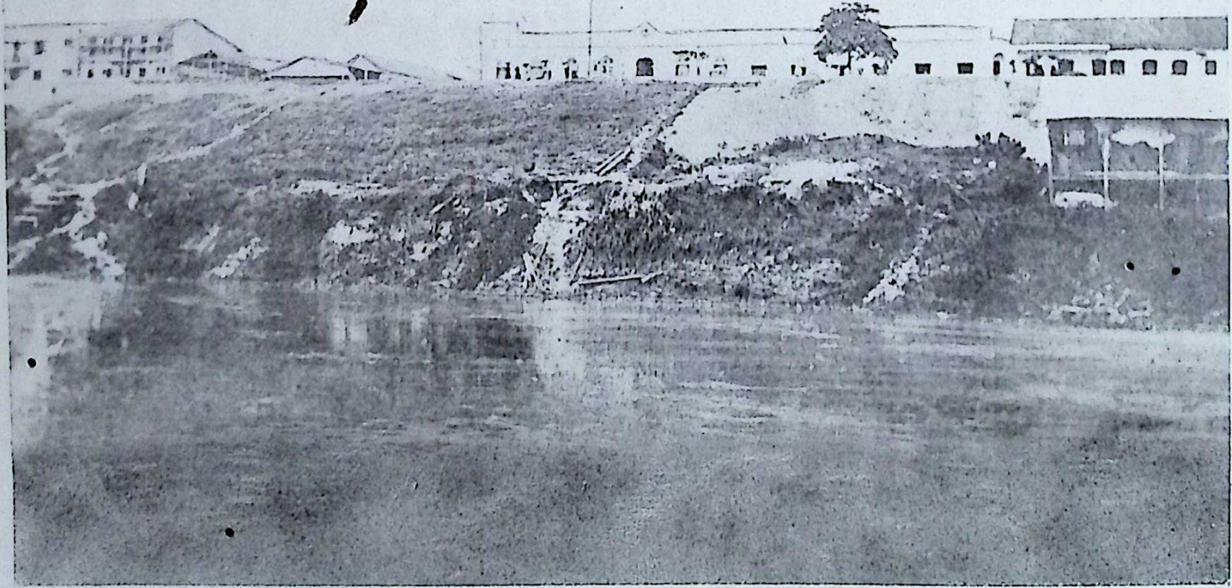
After a short time we were visited by the Peruvian authorities, and I was much struck by the appearance of the officers. Where I had expected to find men of a dark-skinned type like those we had encountered since our arrival in South America, I found them to be whiter in appearance than our own selves, for we were tanned with the sun. Their appearance was pleasing in the extreme, smart men, unostentatious in their bearing, wearing smart white uniforms, and caps with gold braid.

The Customs officer, who took passage on our steamer, in order to prevent the passing of contraband, was an excellent musician, and could converse intelligently on many subjects in English and French.

In the course of conversation I learned that his home was in Lima, the capital of Peru, and that all the officers of the Government were from that region, drawn to the Amazon Valley by the increased opportunities of earning large salaries, or giving up the National Service in favour of commerce.

On 11 December at about 9 p.m. we passed the mouth of a small river on the left bank of the Amazon, and shortly after saw the reflection in the sky of the lights of Iquitos. We dropped anchor about two hours after, right in front of the wharf, but on the opposite bank of the river.

About 6 a.m. we received the visit of the Port authorities, and after an ocular examination on the part of the quarantine medical officer, we were allowed to go alongside. In a very short time I was on shore and in the quarters allotted to me, in a nice house, close to the wharf, and in the principal street of the town. I was thankful indeed to have reached the end of my journey.



IQUITOS. VIEW FROM THE RIVER STEAMER

After introductions to my future companions, I retired to my room, where I spent the remainder of the day in absolute rest and quietude, reflecting on the step I had taken in placing myself in a country so far from home and those dear to me, completely isolated from communication with the world except at intervals of a month or so.

On the following morning I rose early, greatly refreshed, and, all being ready, prepared to accompany two of the junior members of the firm by whom I was employed to get my introduction to a Peruvian hotel.

The Peruvian Customs guard, with whom I had conversed so much while on the steamer, had spoken very unfavourably of the hotels and restaurants in Iquitos, and I found upon entering this one that he had been generous indeed in his descriptions. The hotel, though the best of its kind, was at this time the most abominable place in which I had ever in all my life been obliged to take my meals.

The tables were placed under a veranda looking upon an open court, round the edges of which and down the centre were open drains full of refuse and foul water from the kitchens, which gave off a disgusting stench. The food was poor, and served by filthy waiters on dirty tables covered with dirtier tablecloths, while, to add to one's discomfort, mosquitoes bit my ankles and other parts of my anatomy, and the flies, tired perhaps of feeding in the drains, were attracted to my food.

During the afternoon of the third day after my arrival, while occupied with my duties, I was taken suddenly ill, and went to my room, immediately sending for the doctor of the steamer, who found me suffering from diphtheria.

Luckily, however, I quickly recovered, due to his excellent treatment, and while I was convalescent he, along with Captain Dale, advised and entreated me to return to Europe with them, but as I had taken the decision to come to Iquitos at my own risk and against the wishes of my parents, I resolutely refused to return, a resolution which cost me much suffering later on.

Having almost recovered by the 23rd day of the month, I found it possible to take part in the Christmas festivities, which included a dinner at the house of the British Consular Agent on Christmas Eve, to which it was originally proposed that none but Britishers and Americans should be invited, but it was eventually arranged that the Prefect and his wife, along with several other leading Peruvians, should be asked to join us, in order to satisfy several newly arrived members of the colony.

This gave rise to an unfortunate incident, which was taken advantage of by a young Englishman, who had been strongly in favour of the " all Britishers " movement.

An influential member of our colony (a native of Gibraltar), when the moment of the toasts arrived, proposed the health of our guest, the Prefect, which called from our young countryman a hot protest that the toast was out of order, and, immediately raising his glass, he, in a short and excited speech, declared that, as it was a purely English dinner, he proposed the toast of " The King, God bless him," which was readily responded to, all standing. The toast of "Friends absent and present," was then proposed, and drunk in silence, after which our colonial friend was allowed to drink to whom he pleased. Personally, I remember little more of that eventful night, for probably owing to the weak state I was in, and the excitement of this incident, the liquor got the better of me, and I made an inglorious retreat to my quarters, there to remain until Christmas Day, from which grand day until the arrival of the New Year I spent in the usual round of festivities which are the rule among Britishers abroad, and which it would be of no benefit to describe. My recollections of such days, now that I am safely at home, are apt to bring to memory things that are better buried with the past, memories of friends and companions gone to their long rest, others, broken in health, God alone knows where, all best left in oblivion.

I will now try to describe Iquitos to the reader, as I found it after a month's residence in the town.

It is built on the left bank of the Amazon on high ground, and occupies practically the whole of a bend in the river, while along the bank is constructed the principal thoroughfare of the town. This street is called the " Malecon," meaning mole. The street next in importance is called the " Prospero," and runs in the same direction as and almost parallel with the Malecon.

At regular intervals and crossing these thoroughfares are streets of minor importance, as a rule serving more as gutters and drains.

Down the centre of each street or along the sides, where some attempt at paving exists, run the drains which carry off the sewage of the town, at all times of the year an abomination, the more so in the summer when rains are not sufficiently frequent to carry away all the filth and refuse which are thrown into them. You may imagine what this means in a town which I suppose at that time had about ten to twelve thousand inhabitants, and in which sanitary arrangements were almost unknown, with perhaps the few exceptions where foreigners had erected rude structures over deep holes in the ground.

There are no edifices of any architectural value, while the principal buildings are the " Prefectura " and the gaol, and perhaps the residences of several of the most wealthy traders.

The Prefectura is a one-story adobe building, built round a square which serves no useful purpose, and is occasionally whitewashed. The gaol is a dilapidated old building, and as a gaol has very little value, escapes of prisoners being quite frequent.

There is no church of any kind, nor any kind of mission. There are no theatres, music-halls, nor gardens, the only amusement obtainable being that furnished in two small cafés, where semi-billiard tables may be used at the rate of one sol[1] or two shillings per half-hour ; or seated outside some café shaking dice for small drinks, coffee, ices, etc. ; while if we like to be children again we may take a trip on a tiny model railway for the sum of eightpence per three hundred yards, or a few turns on a merry-go-round, which makes the night hideous with its infernal barrel organ.

The houses are built, some of mud, some of palm tree, some of a wild kind of cane called "canarana" (*Generium segitatum*), and one has even been built of empty kerosene tins flattened out, supplemented by the tin from empty packing-cases. Others, perhaps not more than two hundred, are built of bricks and mortar, and have good cement or boarded floors. The rest are of the usual mud-floor order, with divisions when the needs of the family require it, made of some cheap cloth tacked on to a framework.

The roofs are of straw or corrugated zinc. The grounds surrounding most of the houses are always full of refuse, consisting for the most part of empty tin cans, broken bottles, crockery, and the usual refuse from a kitchen ;

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[1] The Peruvian libra or pound sterling contains ten soles.

among which fowls scratch all day long, picking up a precarious existence. Add to these several dirty ducks waddling in the puddles formed by the dirty water thrown out of the domicile, and an occasional group of "urubus" or gallinazas as they are called in Peru, pulling a putrid turtle shell to pieces in order to consume the skin: you can understand how often one must use a scented handkerchief when walking through the streets of Iquitos.

It is a very disgusting though far from uncommon experience even to-day, when one is in certain streets just before daylight, to receive part of the contents of a bedroom utensil thrown from some door or window into the drains.

Then again, pigs are everywhere, wild-eyed creatures and thin as rakes, owing to quantities of jigger fleas which infest their bodies, and make them look really pitiable, whilst their food, if food it can be called, consists of offal of all kinds, besides human excretions; but though fed in this way, they are killed for human consumption, and the meat is dearer than beef. Reader, never eat pork in these countries unless you know how it has been fed; for although the pig saves so many epidemics owing to his scavenging habit, and in this way is very useful, he is nevertheless as an article of food or for the making of lard an abomination. This does not refer only to the towns, but to every farm or plantation outside the towns. Where pigs are raised in the fields, the writer, in the absence of sanitary arrangements, has been compelled on more than one occasion to protect himself with a stick from the revolting attentions of the scavenging porkers.

There is no drinking water supply beyond what one buys from the water-carriers in the streets, who bring it from springs just outside the town, while for domestic purposes water is drawn from wells or collected in receptacles placed under the gutters of the houses during the rain; and in order to bathe it is often necessary to go down to the river's edge, picking one's way through the garbage which litters the river's banks, taking care not to sprain one's ankles in the numerous rat holes which infest the banks owing to the practice of using them as dumping grounds for refuse.

Running through the two principal streets of the town is a small narrow-gauge railway line, which is the property of Arana Hermanos, a firm which in later years was destined to engage the attention of the whole of the civilized world.

The line is used for carrying cargo to and from the wharf, but carries no passengers. It competes with the native muleteers and porters, who are now restricted to the carrying of moderately light goods, baggage, etc.

The wharf is a floating one, secured to a kind of tower or pier, about ninety to one hundred and fifty feet from the level of the wharf, according to the height of the river. On a level with the top of the bank where the cargo sheds are constructed it is furnished with two small steam derricks or winches, which raise and lower the trucks used in the loading and unloading of steamers at the wharf, and serve also for the raising of cattle, a bend of rope being placed around the horns of each beast, which is hauled into the air, sometimes to fall back to the wharf, owing to the horns becoming torn out. The sufferings endured by the animals while in the air must be terrible.

The town has no lighting, beyond a few kerosene lamps on posts (which are only lit when there is no moon), and the light from the open shops, cafés, bars, restaurants, etc., and we are dependent upon kerosene and candles as illuminants for our offices and homes, though the town will shortly be lit by electricity.

The shops in most cases are well stocked with goods of every description. The trade in articles for the rivers is almost wholly in the hands of Moroccan Jews. The small shops for supplying the needs of the poor or labouring people are run by Chinese, of whom there are a great number, while the proprietors of small eating-houses and taverns and vendors of canned goods are mostly Italians and Spaniards.

Joiners and carpenters, builders, etc., are mostly Spaniards, while hawkers of such wares as clothes and beads are Turks or Syrians, and occasionally Jews.

Hotels, as I have already stated, are wretched, good food is difficult to obtain, beef is bad owing to the great distances travelled by the cattle, coupled with ill-treatment during their journey, and the presence of great numbers of "cattle ticks" adhering to them, which when full of blood are as big as blackberries.

Fresh fish is expensive and is not abundant, except during the short period of the year when the river begins to fall, as then the fish leave the low-lying flooded lakes, rivers, forest, etc., and return to the main streams in very fine condition.

Pork is common, and yet, as previously shown, it is not very advisable to eat it. Fowls and ducks are rare, and are expensive, as also eggs and milk. Bread is abundant and exceedingly well made. Potatoes are imported, but after being so many weeks on the steamer, are not good, their place being taken by "yuca" (*Manihot utilissima*), bananas, and corn, roasted and boiled. Food in general consists of preserved meats, dried fish, vegetables, etc., fresh beans, and the produce of the surrounding country. One has to get used to xarque or jerked beef, and dried fish, of which there are two kinds, the imported bacalao or cod, and paiche, as "piraracu" (*Sudis gigas*) is locally called. This huge fish is the largest fresh-water fish known. Occasionally in Iquitos game is to be had, generally smoked or dried, and when this happens it is an event well worth celebrating. Turtles, too, are common towards the end of the year, and I am of opinion that the flesh of the turtle is the best meat that can be had there, though it is not everyone who can eat it.

The population of about ten thousand is a mixed one, being composed of nationalities of all descriptions, Peruvians from the coast, Brazilians, Indians of Quechua or similar descent, Moroccan and other Jews, Turks, Arabs, Syrians, Greeks, Japs, Chinese, Italians, Spaniards, and a host of others.

The Indians form the labouring element in the town, while all others are occupied in commerce, trade, or as artisans, and a few in administrative positions with the Government or on the river craft.

The men and women are clean, quiet, hard-working people, and although greatly given to the use of aguardiente or white rum, and very lax in their morals, they are an inoffensive and generous people, and when well treated will go to great trouble to repay small favours shown to them, while at the same time, when not well treated, they are sulky and vengeful, and when opportunities offer will leave the service of their masters, no matter how great their indebtedness.

This chapter will have given the reader a slight idea of what Iquitos was in 1905; now, at the end of 1913, it is a fine city, with good drainage, streets, public buildings, hotels, and dwelling-houses. It has a good electric-light supply and improved water, and, from an unhealthy bush town, has come into line with other South American cities. To-day it is a fairly good place to live in, and should have a great future when linked up by railway with the Pacific coast.

CHAPTER III

A VOYAGE UP THE JAVARY

Voyage to the Javary—Pevas—Mission station—Yaguas Indians—Dress and arms—Caballo Cocha—Manatee—Mouth of Javary—Whirlpools—Trading stations—Islandia—A night's enjoyment—Shooting alligators—Iguanas : a common trick—Stewed monkey—A narrow escape—Remate de Males—River Itacoahy—Nazareth—Contraband trading—A loss—First cataract—River Galvez—Game—Insects—River Jaquirana—Puerto Bazan—Return voyage—Drunken rubber workers—A disturbance—Return to Iquitos—Work as a sailor.

SOME two months after my arrival in Iquitos I was instructed to make preparations for my first voyage to the River Javary, a voyage that it was calculated would occupy about two months, as we were to enter the small rivers Galvez and Jaquirana. Three days after being notified, our crew being complete, we sailed from Iquitos.

Our launch *Guerrita*, of some fifteen tons burden, was of great age, although in good condition. It will be readily understood that a boat of this size can carry no passengers, and very little cargo, an inconvenience that was surmounted by towing alongside an iron barge of some twenty tons, called the *Barbara*, which carried our goods destined for trading purposes, and also accommodated our passengers.

At the stern of the launch there was a kind of cabin, which served as office, shop, and sample room, outside the door of which was reserved to me just sufficient space for my hammock, but not enough to suspend a mosquito net.

Shortly after leaving Iquitos, notwithstanding various stops for the embarking of cut wood called "leña" as fuel, we entered a creek, on the left or north bank of the main river, the water of which I noticed was a very dark brown or almost black colour, though perfectly clear and free from mud.

After some twenty minutes the engines were stopped, and we tied up at the small village of Pevas, where I was taken on shore to be presented to several customers of our firm, among whom was an old man of the name of Ruiz.

While in this man's house I saw my first real Indian, under the following circumstances. Sitting in a hammock, I was enjoying a small cup of real coffee and a cigarette, when a shadow darkened the doorway and there entered a fine young Indian, who addressed himself to Señor Ruiz in a language unknown to me.

The Indian was a finely made young man of perhaps five feet eight inches in height, and of excellent muscular development. He was painted upon face, arms, body, and legs with a peculiar reddish paint, extracted from the fruit of a plant locally known as "achiote" (*Bixa orellana*), this in parts being picked out in yellow and black. He had a fine head-dress of grass and feathers, with a kind of cape and skirt of the same material, also amulets above the elbow, and leglets of the same material above the knee. The colour of the grass, owing to its being dry, was of a reddish brown, and seemed to form part of the colour scheme worked out upon his body.

After he had gone I made inquiries, and found that our worthy friend Ruiz had many such Indians working for him, as also had the Catholic priests, who have a Mission station in Pevas.

The Indians belong to a tribe called Yaguas, who inhabit the river of that name. The river enters the Putumayo on its left bank close to the mouth. There are few of them, and they are under the influence of the priests and Señor Ruiz. They seem to be a haughty people, and pay little attention to strangers. They speak their own language, quite distinct from other Indian tongues, and though not in the habit of using any other than their own distinctive dress, are semi-civilized. They are very clever workers in "chambira," or palm-fibre hammocks, which they trade to the above-mentioned Señor Ruiz in exchange for trade goods. This gentleman, in fact, sells them as curios, and they find a ready sale, as also do the Indian dresses, the price of which used to be one pound per suit complete. Yaguas work as rubber gatherers, cultivating very little ground, perhaps not enough to meet their own needs.

After a short stay we left this village *en route* to Caballo Cocha, situated on the right or south bank of the main river, hidden away in a small creek which empties into the Amazon, being a sort of overflow from the lake from which the town gets its name of Caballo Cocha, meaning in English "horse lake." It is a tradition among the Indians that the lake used to be the haunt of wild horses, but for the truth of this I cannot vouch.

It is only during the rainy season that launches can enter the lake, owing to the drying up of the creek, though the lake itself contains plenty of water and has a fair depth. The water is clear, and when one is on the boat fish can be observed at a great depth.

The lake furnishes the inhabitants of Caballo Cocha with good fish, chief among which are paiche, gamitana, boquichico, pallometta, etc., all excellent eating. Besides these there are other coarser and scaleless fish, which are rarely used as food.

"Vaca marina," or sea cow, a species of fresh-water manatee, is also speared in great quantities, and when fresh is an excellent substitute for beef. Quite a large trade is done in the flesh of this animal, preserved in its own grease in large tins, in which it has previously been subjected to heat. This is known as "mechira," as also any other fish or meat preserved in the same manner.

The town itself consists of some forty houses, several of which are built of mud bricks, the rest being of the usual type of cane and palm-tree huts. Rubber is the staple industry, though there is comparatively little commercial activity. Leaving this small town or village, we called at several houses on the way down the river, sometimes in order to exchange goods for rubber.

On the fourth day after sailing from Iquitos we arrived off Leticia, the Peruvian frontier town to which I referred in a previous chapter, in order to present our manifest of cargo, as we were bound for a voyage up the River Javary, which forms the frontier between Peru and Brazil.

Here I went on shore to visit the commandant, and had a good opportunity of examining the place.

There were two or three large houses, one of which was occupied by the officer in charge of the troops, another was occupied by the Customs officers, and a third was apparently used for the accommodation of the twenty odd Quechua Indians, employed as soldiers, who garrison the place.

The houses were ill made, dirty, and inadequate, the offices of the commandant and Customs officers being cubicles of perhaps ten feet square, roughly covered with wire mosquito netting, which, owing to the sad state it was in, formed practically no protection against the awful plague of mosquitoes, which make the lives of these men a misery day and night.

The soldiers, as I have said, are Quechua Indians from the Andean villages, sturdy, strong-looking "cholos," but, however good they may be as fighting material, and they are known to be good, they look a clumsy, dirty, and unmilitary lot, their boots being in every case about four sizes too large for them.

There is no fort here, nor, so far as I know, armament of any description beyond the rifles and side-arms of the troops, a very different state of affairs from what we find at Tabatinga, the Brazilian frontier station, a few hundred yards lower down the river.

There was at one time a good fort here, or, I should say, the spot where the frontier post originally was, that being a place which to-day is some eight hundred yards from the river's edge.

About twenty years ago when this frontier post was opened, a fort was built on high ground on the edge of the river, but owing to the river changing its course it gradually built up a bank and deposited earth, which, receiving seeds of plants arrested in their progress down the river, assisted in forming the ground which is the site of the present frontier post. Thus, what was twenty years ago the frontier post on the edge of the river, is now hidden away in the heart of dense forest, known to but a few and forgotten by all. I understand that the majority of the guns are still there.

Leaving Leticia, after a short run of perhaps two hours, we arrived at the mouth of the Javary. The main river at this point is very narrow, and, owing to the restricted space through which the great amount of water flows, the current is very strong and dangerous. At the point where the Javary empties into the Amazon through its mouths, of which there are three, a very dangerous whirlpool is encountered. In later days I saw a river steamer carried helplessly a distance of some two hundred yards, eventually coming to rest upon one of the banks of the river. The steersman, pluckily holding on to the wheel, unfortunately became impaled by the branch of a tree, which penetrated his chest and pinned him to the woodwork of a deck house as though he were a fly stuck upon a wall.

We slowed down to get well below the whirlpool's contact with the main river, on the edges of a sort of return current, and giving the engines all the steam they could stand, we got safely into the quiet waters of the smaller river, and tied up some ten minutes after at one of our establishments called Islandia, where it was understood that we should have a delay of several days for the taking on of more cargo, due by one of the Brazilian steamers from Manaos.

On the evening of my arrival I was invited to a social evening on the playa, as the large sand-banks in the river are called, and, as all my friends had agreed, I decided to go.

The programme as arranged was something as follows: Some eight or ten families had arranged to spend the evening of the full moon on the playa, the ladies promising to furnish tablecloths, knives, forks, cooking necessaries, etc., and the men were to form fishing parties, the result of their efforts to be cooked by the womenfolk, while the men played guitars and other musical instruments and sang native ditties.

I went with the fishing parties. Each canoe contained three men, the one in the prow furnished with a large bell-shaped cast net, while another helped to paddle the canoe, and a third sat in the stern and attended to the guidance of our craft.

After about an hour's good sport it was decided that we had sufficient, so returning to the playa we delivered our catch to the ladies, who by now had the cloths laid out on the sand and the table prepared for supper.

While we procured wood and water, the women cleaned the fish, and at about 10 p.m. we sat or lay down to table, with appetites sharpened by the cold air of the evening, and, amid much hilarity and fun in general, we did justice to the meal prepared.

The meal having concluded, our lady friends cleared away the dishes, and I went for a short stroll along the sand-bank, disturbing huge flocks of night birds, amongst which was a species of nightjar coloured something like our thrush, and about the same size.

While walking close to the water I noticed a long black object which at the moment I thought was a log, but upon its moving slightly I realized that it was a large alligator, and, procuring a gun, I placed a piece of white material on the end sight, and taking aim I had the satisfaction of putting an end to him, though not so successful with others which I afterwards came across.

Returning from my walk I noticed in the side of some undulations in the sand round holes about the size of those made by a rat, and thinking they might contain the nests of the birds which I had disturbed, I took my knife from my belt and proceeded to excavate.

After removing a quantity of sand I placed my arm in the hole, and felt what appeared to be the tail of a small alligator. I dug away with renewed zeal, and after a few minutes was startled by the inhabitant of the hole dashing out and running at a good pace toward the water. I started in pursuit, but could not catch him. On rejoining the party I recounted my experience with a " young alligator." The story was greeted with roars of laughter and remarks about " river chicken." It was subsequently explained to me that I had dug out a large green iguana, a species of lizard about three feet long, which is largely eaten, and is not easily distinguished from chicken. The colour of the flesh, its taste, and the similarity of its bones make it an easy matter to induce one to believe that he has partaken of fowl, when in fact he has eaten the flesh of a reptile. Many a new arrival has expressed his intention not to eat what to him seemed abhorrent, only to enjoy a good meal of iguana, and subsequently to be presented with the skin, head, and tail, at the termination of his meal, after having expressed his enjoyment of the chicken provided.

The same trick is played on persons who unknowingly make their first acquaintance with stewed monkey, a frequent and, in the writer's opinion, a very succulent and nourishing food.

My discomfiture owing to the mistake soon left me, and I joined in the dancing and singing with which we spent the night. About daylight we all took our places in the canoes, and, casting off, allowed them to slowly drift down river in the direction of our homes, a delightful and memorable journey.

The occupants of the canoes chatted with one another, others chaffed those in adjacent canoes, while in several others the thrum of stringed instruments could be heard, accompanying some plaintive love song sung in Portuguese or Spanish, of which the river dwellers are very fond and have a large repertory.

The following afternoon I thought I would take a canoe upon my own, in order to do some fishing, and perhaps get a shot at some passing water-fowl.

I provided myself with a forty-four Winchester rifle and ammunition, some hooks and lines, and paddled across to the opposite bank in a small canoe, but, having forgotten the bait with which to prepare them, I shot a small bird, and, baiting my hooks, I cast my line.

I did not anticipate encountering any insect pests, not having noticed any the previous evening, but, after about twenty minutes, the attentions of swarms of mosquitoes, and a large blood-sucking fly called "tabana" in Spanish and "motuca" by the Brazilians, caused me to draw in my lines and beat a hasty retreat. Unfortunately, in warding off the attacks of these pests, while crossing the river, I lost my balance, and over went the canoe, precipitating me into the river.

I was not at that time a very proficient swimmer, and therefore made no attempt to right the boat, but struck out for the shore and safety. After a few moments I was horrified to notice two alligators, one above me and the other a short distance down the river in a direction which would converge at a point about fifteen yards from where I should make the bank. I cried out in terror, and redoubled my efforts to reach the shore, though my progress must have been slow, owing to my being hampered with heavy clothing and boots. Luckily, however, my plight had been seen, and a young Brazilian gave the alarm, and picking a loaded Winchester rifle began to shoot at the advancing reptiles, though without any great accuracy, due no doubt to his excitement. Others joined in the firing, many of the bullets passing close to me and increasing my danger. However, a canoe was soon in the water, and I was hauled aboard in a very exhausted state. Thanks to a robust constitution I suffered no ill effects from either my immersion or the fright. Since that day I have never missed an opportunity of helping in the extinction of these river tigers.

After a rest we departed the next day from Islandia to continue our voyage up the Javary, and after about ten hours' steaming, arrived at the town of Nazareth, which is on the Peruvian side of the river. On the Brazilian bank is a small town called Benjamin Constant, known locally as "Remate de Males" or "end of all ills," situated at the mouth of the River Itacoahy, a district which produces a plentiful supply of Para rubber of a high grade.

Here we remained several days engaged in the sale of the merchandise which we had brought from Iquitos, and arranging the purchase of various lots of rubber.

The town or village has about eight hundred or more inhabitants, and every building is devoted to trade, the occupiers of the shops which compose the town living at the rear of the premises.

The houses are constructed on wooden piles, being raised from two to eight feet from the ground, in order to protect the inhabitants when the river is in flood. When the floods occur traffic from shop to shop is conducted on temporary bridges made of planks and upturned empty packing-cases or in canoes.

The sole industry of the town is the selling and buying on both sides of the river of goods and produce which are contraband, the passing of which is rarely interfered with, owing to the distance from Leticia and Tabatinga and the fiscal post at San Antonio at the lower mouth of the Javary.

Brazilians run contraband from Peru, and the Peruvians run contraband from Brazil, the result being that both sides oppose the authorities, and help one another by every means in their power.

I have seen as many as five large river steamers tied up at Nazareth for several days at a time, taking on board Brazilian produce which paid not a cent to the Peruvian Government as duty; this in broad daylight and under the eyes of Customs officers who were afraid to do their duty.

We ourselves took on a great quantity of Brazilian tobacco, farina, dried meat, beans, coffee, sugar, rum, etc., which was sold in the higher reaches of the river to Peruvian rubber gatherers, in Peruvian territory, in exchange for Peruvian rubber, at the exorbitant prices prevalent for these articles in Peru, owing to heavy duties. The reader will see that the profit is a very good one to the trader, as he pays no duty, and yet receives the same price for his goods as though the duty had been paid.

The greatest supporters of this practice of defeating the Peruvian revenue are the traders in Iquitos, who, irrespective of nationality, make great pretence of their commercial honesty and good faith in all dealings with Europe.

We continued our journey with about eighty passengers crowded into every possible nook on board. We had not proceeded very far when I discovered that one of the passengers had relieved me of a gold watch and chain which I valued greatly, but was never able to recover. We arrived at the first "cachoeira," or cataract, which, having plenty of water, we soon passed, and from here on for several days we were continually stopping in order to sell goods in exchange for rubber. I had every opportunity for studying the conditions of the rubber gatherers, but will reserve the impressions acquired during my life among them until a later chapter in the book.

After some days we left the main river and entered a small stream named the Galvez, and after some three days we arrived at the destination of our passengers, who were contracted rubber labourers.

This small stream was very densely wooded on both sides, with high ground at intervals which appeared to be the termination of a small mountain chain, probably the same as those behind or in the district of Contamana in the River Ucayali.

Plenty of good game was to be had—pavas, paughil, peccaries, inhambu (a kind of grouse), macaws, and monkeys in abundance; and the voyaging in this river would have been a great pleasure, if it had not been for the myriads of piums which made life a burden during the day, ceasing their attention just before sunset, to give place to almost intolerable swarms of mosquitoes (zancudos).

After my experience in this stream it was a relief to get into the broader river, and though it was midday and exceedingly hot I took the opportunity of the absence of pests to turn into my hammock, and so exhausted had I become that I did not wake for many hours.

Leaving the Galvez far behind, we eventually arrived at a point where the river appeared to end, but turning sharply to our left found that we were navigating the waters of the River Yaquirana.

After about four days we arrived at the limit of navigation, Puerto Bazan. Here we disposed of the greater part of whatever merchandise was on board, and, receiving rubber in exchange, commenced our return journey, arriving eventually at the mouth of the River Javary at Islandia, after an absence of nearly two months, during which time many things had occurred to make our arrival with rubber welcome indeed. This was shipped without delay and remittances forwarded to Europe in order to appease the demands of financiers who were just beginning to feel the effects leading up to the crisis which later fell upon all connected with rubber.

We stayed in Islandia, I think, about two months, during which time I had little to do beyond the ordinary daily round of duties attached to any trading station.

One night we received a visit from some six rubber gatherers who were under the influence of liquor, having been to a kind of dance or "fiesta" in celebration of Carnival. They made extensive purchases, after having mauled everything displayed in the store, and then asked for the "trago," a drink of white rum, to which every customer is usually invited. On being refused they became very abusive and noisy.

One of the junior members of the firm was attending to them, and, hearing the row, his brother and myself made an appearance upon the scene just in time to see one of the men upon the counter with a "faca" or long dagger, a favourite weapon of the Brazilians, in his hand. We rushed upon him, and were in a moment attacked by all of them. I picked up a heavy shoe and let the one who came at me have the heel behind his ear, and, as I stepped to one side, with a quick movement of my arm threw the shoe at the large lamp burning over the counter and plunged the room into instantaneous darkness, declaring at the same time that I would shoot in the direction of the first man to move. Immediately they all dashed through one of the doors, tearing to get at their canoes, in their fear of a gun which did not exist, and harassed by the attentions of one of our dogs, which bit several of them. We never had them visit us again, nor, I think, has the store been molested since.

When staying in Islandia, matters with the firm were going from bad to worse, and eventually in the month of May, 1906, it was decided to send the launch to Iquitos, and along with several members of the firm we left Islandia, arriving in Iquitos without incident. There preparations were begun for the closing of the Iquitos branch, but, unfortunately for the senior member of our firm, it was found that things were in such a state that, despite his unceasing efforts and self-sacrifice, it would be necessary to call a meeting of creditors, and after a few days our doors were closed upon us; my chief having given up to his creditors all he possessed, including petty cash, I was thrown upon my resources in Iquitos, without any money, and no knowledge of where I should get my next meal, though an Englishman gave me a place to sleep, only to ask me to procure other quarters so soon as he knew that I was "broke."

Walking down the Malecon one morning about six o'clock, having been entirely unsuccessful in obtaining employment, I interviewed the captain of a river steamer, asking him to give me something to do on board in return for my keep, or to train me as an apprentice with a view to getting command of a small launch myself. I was unsuccessful in this, but he referred me to another who required sailors, and going aboard his ship I was taken on as an ordinary sailor on a river boat, manned by dirty and ignorant Indians of Quechua origin, with whom I should be obliged to work, performing the same duties, and receiving the same abuse from the commander.

However, I had to live, and hunger getting the better of me, I made a good meal of dried fish and rice, and some boiled bananas, and, feeling well, turned to work. Though a novice, I was soon able to handle cargo as well as anyone, perhaps because I always considered the best way to move it.

At this time I spoke very little Spanish, and my companions always conversed in Quechua, which I did not understand. Loading being complete and our crew all aboard, after a delay of several days, we left Iquitos about five in the afternoon, *en voyage* to the reaches of the River Ucayali.

CHAPTER IV

A VOYAGE UP THE UCAYALI

Experiences as a sailor—Loading fuel—Woods used—Improved conditions—Birds noticed—Monkeys—Lizards—Trees and foliage—Dugong—Manatee—Cokama Indians—*Sudis gigas* or paiche—A rubber establishment—Alligators: how trapped, their uses as talismans—Contamana, arrival—Hills—Fruit trees, etc.—Description of the town—Customs of rubber workers—Trading and concubinage—An unfortunate "cauchero"—Massisea—Wireless telegraphs—A dangerous whirlpool—Cantamayo—More hills—Thermal springs—Temperature—The forest—River Sepahua, arrival—Return to Iquitos, arrival.

AFTER running about two hours from Iquitos, we stopped, in order to take on fuel, at a spot where there were perhaps some twenty thousand sticks of good wood for sale, the majority of which was a wood known by a variety of names, but of which the most common is umiry in Brazil (*Humirium floribundum*), and also another known as capirona in Peru, and pao mulatto in Brazil (*Pentaclethra filamentosa*). These are fine, hard, and heavy woods, and are the most favoured for fuel, as they burn well when green, and give great heat. Other woods used are, remo caspi (*carapanauba*), massaranduba (*Mimusops balata*), and sometimes the nuts of the shapaja tree fern (*Attalea speciosa martius*). This nut is also used by the rubber gatherers in the smoking of rubber, as it burns well owing to its oily nature. When used as fuel in the furnaces of the launches it is said to be very destructive to them, due, I am given to understand, to the great quantities of soot from its dense smoke becoming fired and charring the boilers.

The work of embarking the wood was a trying ordeal for me; my shoulders soon became raw, my hands badly torn with the splinters, and, as I was barefooted, the bites from ants and mosquitoes, etc., soon drove me into an almost desperate mood, and I would gladly have abandoned the boat if there had been an opportunity of returning to Iquitos.

However, I had to continue, and make the best of my condition, and reflected that, at least, I had food, with a roof to cover me, but it was terribly hard to be patient.

Owing to the fact of the sailors being obliged to sleep under the prow of the boat, where about eighteen hammocks were swung, it was not possible to use a mosquito net, and my sufferings from the bites of the demoniacal pests I shall ever remember.

Imagine, if you can, my lot; bound to help in the loading of wood, twice and even three times a day, often at night, the unloading of cargo and the loading of rubber, the cleaning down of decks, etc., and fed on dried fish or meat, with beans and rice, two meals per day.

After several days I became more accustomed to my state, but luckily for me the captain of the launch became dissatisfied with the boatswain, and, after discharging him from the ship, he elected me to replace him, which meant an advance in salary to me of nearly £5 per month.

As a sailor I was paid £5 per month ($52.50) in local money, whereas as boatswain my wage was $100, about £9 10s. per month. As boatswain I came more in touch with the captain of the boat, who became very friendly with me, and accepted with alacrity my offer to help in clerical duties, occasioned by the sale of goods and purchase of produce. Before completing the voyage I had become his confidential help, and from then my progress with my employers was rapid.

During the course of several uneventful days we ascended the river, stopping only for fuel. Owing to the strong currents our boat ran very close to the banks, and I was able to observe closely the bush. At every turn of the river one sees large patches of bright green grass, which is often used as food for cattle when on board the river boats. This grass seems to be the home of countless small birds, some with a pretty piercing whistle. They were in colour black, yellow, and white, but another very common bird was the "soldado," or soldier bird, with a red head, front, and breast, and black back and wings. There was also a bird very like a magpie in form, but with raven-black plumage, beak and feathers. It was always to be seen in small flocks.

Then there were garças, better known as egrets or ospreys, beautiful white birds, much pursued for their feathers, but hard to shoot, owing to the smallness of their bodies.

We were continually disturbing bands of monkeys, called by the natives "frailecitos," meaning small friars. They were of a yellowish colour, with almost white fronts and bellies, and a black marking on their heads not unlike a cowl, from which they probably get their name. They are considered to be almost a delicacy by the river dwellers, and the writer has made many good meals with this kind of meat, even when other foods could be had. These were not the only monkeys noticed, for we saw several similar in size and kind, but of a greyish colour, and called locally "mono churro," the pelt of which is thick and would make a good and attractive lady's fur. Although not actually seeing any, we were aware of the presence of a large reddish-brown monkey, known as "coto," from his guttural cry, produced by a shell-like arrangement in the throat.

Lizards of all colours were to be seen upon the banks, and some large green specimens with black and red heads were noticed. Butterflies of all kinds took advantage of some bright sandy spot in the sun, and in some places their number was incredible; yellow, white, and black and white varieties predominated, though red, purple, and all shades of blue helped, when disturbed, to make a kaleidoscopic sight not easily forgotten.

Several capybara (*Hydrochoreurus capibara*), animals as large as pigs and of the "cavy" family, called locally ronsoco, could be seen on the banks of the river. One of these animals was shot, the meat prepared and served to the passengers and crew. I thoroughly enjoyed the meat, though several of the crew refused to eat it, asserting that it produced discolouring of the skin known as "carate" (pigmentation) and a kind of eczema. However, neither on that nor subsequent occasions have I suffered any ill effects after partaking of its flesh.

The banks all along are well wooded, some fine-looking trees known as "algodon" being very common; cedar (*Cedrela odorata*), capirona (*Pentaclethra filamentosa*), remo caspi ("carapana-uba" of the Brazilians), caixinguba, assacu, and lauro are the most noteworthy, but some of the palm trees deserve special mention, and will be referred to when dealing with the timber of the Amazon Valley later on in the book.

The foliage of the trees is of all shades, and many trees bear sweet-smelling and pleasing flowers, while parasitical plants not unlike pineapples grow on the branches of trees of all sizes. Varieties of the orchid can be seen everywhere, also the green and other-coloured passiflora, the whole forming a botanist's paradise.

Occasionally one sees the ripple caused by some large animal in the water, to be followed by the appearance of a dugong, reddish in colour, as he comes to the surface in order to blow. They are known as "botos," and are probably of the genus *Phœnæna Braziliensis.* "Vaca marina," or sea cow, is common here. The principal industry of the district, after rubber collecting, is the harpooning of this animal and paiche. The fishermen are mostly Cokama Indians, who in their small canoes can be seen with lance poised ready to strike.

The flesh of the vaca marina when fresh is not unlike veal, and when preserved in its own fat is very tasty, but when cut into strips and salted, to be subsequently dried in the sun, it acquires a very disagreeable odour. The same refers to the paiche, which when fresh or smoked is fine, but when cured is disgusting in the extreme. Iquitos is the market for these articles, and there is always a demand for the lard of the vaca marina, owing to its utility in the preparing of the soap locally made, which when ready for sale is not unlike the soft soap known at home.

About the seventh day from Iquitos we entered, on the north bank of the river, what I learned was the outlet from a very large inland lake or "cocha." We ascended quite twelve hours when we stopped at the rubber establishment of my employers, and still had not arrived at the lake. The water was of a strange tint, brownish black, but free from sediment. Alligators abounded everywhere, and in no other river have I seen so many. Owing to the damage done by them among pigs and cattle on the property, the manager had been obliged to lay traps, one of which I was enabled to see, and also to witness the capture of a large specimen.

A piece of soft wood called "topa," a wood used as the basis of rafts, owing to its softness and lightness, was wrapped within a large piece of meat and thrown into the water, and shortly after was seized upon by the saurian, whose teeth, unfortunately for him, penetrated the meat and became embedded in the soft wood, thus forcing his jaws to remain open, and effectively preventing his submersion. When in this helpless state two men went out in a small canoe and made him secure to a lariat, and, the end passed to shore, he was quickly hauled high and dry and dispatched; the bait and traps being thrown into the water to serve again.

The skins of alligators captured were cured and sold in Iquitos, and the fat rendered down to serve as an unguent for the treatment of rheumatism, the natives having great faith in the curative properties of this article.

The teeth are preserved and sold to the rubber gatherers, who rarely leave their homes without a fine alligator tooth in their possession, it being a belief among them that it is a talisman against all kinds of reptiles.

Remaining only a little while, we returned to the main river, and after several shorter delays we arrived at Contamana, the first large place of importance since leaving Iquitos.

This little town is situated at the foot of a small range of hills, and is built along the river bank, in an extension of about three kilometres, the whole of which has been planted with fruit trees, mainly mango, caimita, abacate or alligator pear, and oranges, whilst plentifully intermixed are found pineapples, cashew, and several varieties of anona. Flowers are in profusion, and are well cared for. Contamana is one of the nicest villages to be found on the banks of the Amazon. The houses are well built, and it is the headquarters of a Roman Catholic Mission. The friars wear a brown habit, and allow their beards to grow. They have a fine mission station, and grow their own grapes, from which they make wine for their personal use. They do not appear to be greatly liked, and many curious tales are told of them, which, however, do not come within the scope of this book.

Contamana has a population during the dry months of perhaps two to three hundred souls, mostly women, while during the rainy season this figure is trebled, owing to the return of the rubber workers from their labours, some in order to recuperate, others to spend without stint in all kinds of foolishness the profits acquired during their stay in the bush. There are fine trading stores, as usual, run by Arabs, some Chinese and one or two Moroccan Jews, who in the absence of the caucheros and seringueros do practically no trade beyond catering on credit to the needs of those left behind, but upon the return of the men big business is done in the purchase of their rubber, which is, as a rule, transacted while the vendor is under the influence of drink supplied by the trader, who takes advantage of the man's condition to sell him, in part or whole payment for his rubber, goods that, were the man responsible for his actions, he would never think of purchasing, much less at the price at which he is represented to have purchased them.

Another thing I have often noticed is the custom, as is the case in Contamana, of the men who are married leaving their wives and children in the town and taking into the bush "compañeras," or, as we should say, paramours, to minister to their needs, an arrangement which does not cause any friction in the household, and even when, as is commonly the case, children are the result, legitimate wife and concubine live in common and the man returns to the rubber forests with a new compañera.

While here I was introduced to a cauchero, who upon one of his expeditions to the bush had fallen into the hands of, I think, the Cunibo or Shipibo Indians, but was eventually rescued. This poor man told me that the Indians had shockingly mutilated him, had kept him in a small pen or corral, and fed him on boiled green maize and other fattening foods, in preparation for one of their cannibalistic feasts, just in the same manner as we might fatten a porker.

This poor man upon his return made known to his wife his state. She abandoned him immediately, and has never returned, while he is subjected to the cruel remarks of his fellow-men, who learning of his infirmity treat the matter as a huge joke, with a degree of callousness which I have never seen equalled.

After leaving Contamana our next stop was at Masisea, on the same side of the river and just above the mouth of the River Tamaya, a river in which, in later days, I was to suffer great privation while lost in the bush.

Masisea is of no importance beyond being the station for the wireless telegraph between Iquitos and Puerto Bermudez, from whence the overland telegraph is laid to Lima, the capital of Peru. The wireless telegraph was installed on the Telefunken System by Germans, and there are four stations between Iquitos and Puerto Bermudez.

The approach to the port of Masisea is exceedingly dangerous, owing to the strong current and weight of water, and great caution must be exercised to avoid the awful whirlpools which in later years drew under the water in an instant a fine new river launch of some fifty tons register, together with the majority of her crew, among the unfortunate victims being a smart and well-known young German.

Shortly after leaving the port we arrived at a point known as Chanchamayo or Cantamayo, where the river narrows greatly, forcing its way through a gap in the high hills on either side, and where an Iquitos doctor has tried, with but little success, to establish a sanatorium close to some good thermal springs. These springs are common all over the district, which appears to be of volcanic origin, as is clearly shown by the quantities of igneous rock and pumice which are encountered everywhere.

After leaving Cantamayo we begin to notice a fall in temperature, the nights being particularly cold and a good blanket indispensable. This is, I suppose, due to the winds which come down to us from the Andes, to which we are now quite close, and we notice a marked change in the forest. Palms do not appear to be so abundant, and the trees are grander than any we have yet seen, each one standing alone without the dense bush seen in the lower parts of the river.

The forests do not contain much undergrowth, and one can see well into them from the steamer. Insect pests do not make their presence known to us—if indeed they exist—which I believe is doubtful. The banks are occasionally broken by some pretty, well-built house, the residence of the owners or their agents, who work the small " haciendos " or farms which are well stocked with cattle.

After some five weeks' journey from Iquitos, including our many delays *en route*, due to the continual stops at the houses of rubber proprietors, we arrived at our destination, the mouth of the River Sepahua, the current of which makes it insurmountable by river steamers, unless they be very powerful, and even those that do enter, do so at great risk, owing not only to the current, but to its narrowness.

Our cargo was quickly bundled out of the holds and placed on the river bank, after which it was covered by making a rough hut of palm leaves and left for the arrival of its owner or his representative.

Letters were also left advising the date of our next voyage, so that he would be prepared with his produce, in order that it could be embarked.

Nothing more remaining to be done, we commenced our return voyage to Iquitos, and were soon in the "mosquito zone" again; but as our stops were now of short duration, and we travelled further away from the banks than when ascending the river, the few insects we did get on board were soon blown away by the breeze occasioned by our increased speed.

After eight weeks' absence from Iquitos we eventually arrived again with a good load of rubber and vegetable products, which made our trip a profitable one. This fact must have put our senior partner in a good frame of mind, for upon my being introduced to him by the captain, who expressed his satisfaction with my work, he asked me to visit his private house, when, my circumstances having been made known to him, my position with his firm was improved. From that day until my retirement from their employ, I settled down to learn all that one requires to know in order to trade with any degree of success in the rivers and small towns, and after four months with the launch was given an important commission, the carrying out of which, as the reader will learn, caused me great suffering.

CHAPTER V

A VOYAGE TO THE TAMAYA

Mouth of the river—Description—The trading station—The Chama Indians—Trade—Cultivation—Domesticated tapirs—Incident with wasps—Hunting—Game—By canoe to the Putaya—Indian dugout—Description of Chamas—The customs of Chamas—Curious knife—Spider monkeys—First meal of monkey—First camp—Forest noises—The peculiar bean—Arrival up to cataract—Another camp—Fine fish—Passing the rapids—Description of fall—A large hornet—A Caucheros' village—Putaya—Arrival.

HAVING given the reader a rough idea of the journey from Iquitos up the Ucayali, I would ask him to imagine us at the mouth of the River Tamaya, mentioned in my last chapter, which enters the Amazon at a point about 7½° S. and 74° W. of Greenwich.

Entering the narrow river, we are immediately struck with the numbers of large cochas or lakes on either side of the river, and the scarcity of forest. The most prominent tree seen for the first two days' journey on entering this river is in appearance not unlike the banana and plantain, but produces no fruit.

The river is narrow, and for a distance of perhaps three hundred miles is very deep, and dangerous to navigate for all but very small launches. Until we arrive close to the first habitation, some two hundred and fifty miles from the mouth, the character of the river is unchanged, but in two or three hours we find ourselves in an entirely different country.

High banks and rocky ground become the rule, birds and beasts abound, and after passing in the distance a stretch of mountainous country we arrived at the house of a young Peruvian trader, named Francisco Carrones. Here we found that the river was falling so rapidly, owing to the scarcity of rain in its higher reaches, that we decided to discontinue our journey until the arrival of the next flood water. The launch remained here about a month, before we were able once again to ascend the river.

The proprietor of this trading station lived here alone with his wife, along with a male and a female servant, in a country populated by semi-civilized Chama Indians. Life for the little group must have been a solitary one, for the proprietor told me that not more than three launches a year were accustomed to entering the river, and that only to bring cargo and take away his produce.

Ours was the first visit to his establishment in a space of two months, and for that reason we were made the recipients of most welcome presents of vegetables and game almost daily, and a great amount of celebration was carried on for several days after our arrival.

In the course of conversations with this man I learned that his income was derived from his dealings with the Chama Indians, consisting mostly of sales of cheap guns, shot, powder, axes, machetes, knives, and beads with which these Indians adorn themselves. In return for these and other trade goods the Indians brought dried fish, vaca marina, etc., in which our friend did a lucrative trade.

Another source of income was derived from occasional sales to the Peruvian caucheros who had recourse to his establishment when their supplies became exhausted, they often making journeys of more than a month in search of food, implements, powder, and shot.

Cultivation was on a very limited scale, nor were there any animals beyond two young tapirs and a few fowls. The tapirs were the most remarkably docile animals I had seen. Here were two animals, taken from the forest when young, become so exceedingly tame, that with their natural element at a distance of only fifty yards, and under absolutely no restraint, they remained in surroundings completely strange to wild animals. Their owner daily said that, were it not for these two friends of his, he would have died from ennui, and that I can quite believe, for to see their antics when taking their bath in the river, in company with their master, was too humorous for words. They would dive under him and one another, coming to the surface just under the objects of their play, and would roll about in the water, their eyes brilliant with fun, and never showing the slightest sign of bad temper.

It was exceedingly funny to see one of them leave the water after his bath and roll himself in mud, then afterwards in dry leaves, which, adhering to the mud and clay upon his body, made him look like the ogre of some bad nightmare.

While here I made several incursions into the surrounding bush, under the guidance of the male servant, who on one occasion played me a very reprehensible trick which, however, everyone else thought a good joke.

Close to the house was an old plantation of "guavas," or goiabas, on the branches of several of which I noticed a great number of small yellow orchids about the size of our English pansy. I had not seen the dome or bell-shaped nest of a rather large wasp, but my guide soon let me know that it existed, and that the inhabitants were "at home." Taking a large piece of hard earth he threw it into the tree, ostensibly to bring down fruit, instead of which he brought down upon me the wrath of the infuriated pests, which stung me about the face and neck sufficiently to close my eyes for a day or two, and to bring on a very high fever for several hours. However, I never forgot the trick nor the enjoyment of others at the discomfiture of the "gringo," and, though not by nature vindictive, I confess I have never lost the opportunity of treating Latin-Americans to a similar prank.

Game here was very abundant, and our men having few duties to hinder them, spent a great deal of their time in hunting and preserving whatever meat was not used. Macaws, parrots, partridge, several kinds of birds, apparently of the turkey or pheasant family, peccaries, deer, land tortoises, armadillos, paughil, piuri, monkeys, and even squirrels were brought in every day by the hunters.

It was eventually decided by the captain that in order to gain a little time it would be necessary to dispatch a "commission" by canoe to the head-waters of the river, to warn the caucheros of the presence of our launch, so that everything could be ready for her arrival.

Upon this coming to the knowledge of our crew, one and all resolutely refused to make the journey, considering it too hazardous by canoe, as none of them knew the river. While matters were at this stage a party of Chama Indians came in to trade, and the proprietor of the trading station offered his help, in inducing several of them to conduct a canoe to the upper reaches of the river. After a great deal of discussion and a price being agreed upon, five of the men agreed to go, and I was selected to accompany them, but, not knowing the Indians, I raised some objection. They were informed of this, and appeared to be greatly amused, and so my doubts being dispelled for a moment I agreed to go. The Peruvian trader assured me that though the journey would be a long and trying one, my best course would be not to interfere with the Indians during the voyage, but to allow them to make the trip with the rests and delays that they found convenient, even to travelling day and night if they so desired. I thanked him for his advice, and was particular to follow it, for which I had cause ultimately to be thankful.

Embarking one morning about seven o'clock in a long narrow "obada" or Indian dugout canoe, I took my leave, and the five Indians pushed off with long poles, with which they were furnished. They all stood in the canoe, the steersman standing upon the overhanging stern. I sat almost at the stern of the canoe, amid a jungle of my own and the Indians' effects and several small cases of provisions.

I had plenty of opportunity for studying these Indians. During the greater part of the journey they rarely spoke to one another, unless to give some warning against some obstruction, or a request to put into the bank for a short rest.

They were all of them tall, well-set young men with the exception of the leader, who was an old man and shorter than his companions. His place was in the prow of the canoe, and he kept time for the movement of the poles. All were dressed in white shirt-like garments, open with a V-shape at the front and with tight cuffs at the wrist. These shirts were tastefully worked with small glass beads in designs mainly of red, white, blue, and black.

Around their necks, wrists, and waists they wore tight bands of bead-work; the women have the same custom, but in addition bind the knee and ankles. Men and women allow the hair of their head to grow to the shoulders and use a fringe which is allowed to grow down to the eyebrows, but, as amongst many African tribes, they patiently pull out the smaller hairs of the body with two small shells not unlike cockles, obtained from the small streams and lakes.

They do not mutilate the face, nor do they perforate the ear or lip, though they perforate the nostrils, in which they place thin reeds almost four inches long. I did not observe them using coca on this journey, but know that it is used during their festivities. Each man carried the hollowed tooth of an alligator or jaguar, used by them in imitating the calls of various animals and birds. Their only arm beside the "pucuna" or blow gun was a small, peculiarly shaped knife of their own make.

The length of the knife is about four inches, and the blade is half its length. It is shaped not unlike a sickle or bill-hook, but sharpened only on the round or curved edge. The blades are made of any iron the Indian may be able to obtain, and are beaten to their final shape while the metal is hot. When ready for the haft, the blades are again heated and burned into the wood, which is then well bound with "chambira," or palm fibre, and treated with a little wax, procured from the hives of wild bees. The blades are sharpened, and the knives are then ready for use.

These Indians seem to use great quantities of tobacco leaf in making and smoking cigarettes. Instead of papers they used the partly dried leaf of a small plant, used also in the making of thatch. I tried some of their leaf, but was nearly choked by the strength of it, accelerated perhaps by a suggestion of red pepper.

It was whilst with these people that I got my first meal of monkey. We had come across a large band of spider monkeys, who did not appear to mistrust us, so the old man quietly guided the canoe into the bank, and picking up his blow gun and darts, was soon in the bush, followed by the other three " bogas," the steersman remaining with me. After a very short interval they returned with a heavy load of monkeys, and I was surprised to notice the great length of limb of this species (*Ateles Paniscus*).

The Indians apparently decided not to travel further without a night's rest (we had already travelled three days), so they made for a sand-bank close at hand, and hauled the canoe high and dry. A small hut of "canarana" was soon made for me, and a larger one for themselves, while a huge fire was built just in front of the " ranchos," and after they had cleaned the monkeys by singeing every particle of fur and removing the entrails, the flesh was soon on green sticks and sizzling in front of the fire. The appetizing smell thrown off by the roasting appealed to me so strongly that I abandoned my proposed meal of tinned meat and biscuit in favour of the roast, and I must say that I do not remember to have enjoyed a meal so much as this one. From that day I have been an advocate of monkeys as food, and frankly admit that since arriving in England have had a hankering after a piece of roast or boiled monkey.

The next morning the Indians called me about three o'clock, and we resumed our journey. It was a beautiful night, and a clear moon lit up the banks. Occasionally some animal would be heard moving uneasily, perhaps owing to the cry of a jaguar which could be heard from no great distance, whilst great toads would repeatedly croak in a deep note, resembling a voice calling upon us to stop. The chicharras and other insects break the silence of the night, coupled with the deep barking noise made by some alligator in the river or creeks.

The Amazonian forests are never silent; all hours of the day or night some member of creation must make his presence known; but just before a storm, if one is in the bush, a great quietness falls upon the locality, to be inevitably broken by the croaking of frogs or toads.

We travelled all day with only one short break for a hasty lunch, and to collect some fruit called "chimbilla" (*Tecoma stans*). This is a bean-like pod containing black seeds encased in a sweetish hairy-like substance, this being the edible portion. Each bean is from six to ten inches in length, and there seem to be several varieties. Another which I tried was a long, twisted pod sometimes about twenty inches in length, containing beans similar to chimbilla, but much larger, and the edible portion more generous. This fruit among the Loreto Peruvians is known as anona. Cases are known of the pod being used in place of a whip to administer a beating, and, judging from its size, hard edges, and protuberances, the result must be very painful for the unfortunate victim.

Our journey continued for several days without any apparent change in the appearance of the river, and without anything of importance occurring. On the tenth day we arrived about dusk at the foot of a small cataract, and the Indians made preparations for camp, our third since leaving the launch. My body ached all over, my bones were stiff and sore, owing to my cramped position in the canoe, which I had to endure in order to maintain its stability, and I was glad indeed to see that one of the Indians attended to the fixing up of my camp bed almost immediately, and I was thus enabled to stretch myself out and rest my weary body.

The following morning one of the Indians went to examine the rapids, in order, as I supposed, to decide which would be our best passage, but after a delay of perhaps ten minutes he returned with four fine-looking fish, called by the Brazilians "tucanare." They were soon cooked, and with some dry biscuits and farina made a fine dish. I do not know to what family these fish belong, but they are easily distinguishable owing to the presence of a round marking on each side of the body, close to the tail, coloured in red and black.

The passage of the rapids was rather difficult; about three hundred metres from the fall itself the water was very much broken, and caused our canoe to ship quite a lot of water. The canoe was propelled by five men, two on each side and the steersman at the stern. As the pair on either side worked with their poles the steersman worked his on the opposite side of the stern, thus keeping the canoe in a direct course.

In this way the canoe was forced through the rapids some ten feet at a time until we arrived at the actual fall. Then I was told to disembark on a large flat rock, close to the river bank, which at this point is about one hundred and fifty feet high, and composed of solid rock. The canoe was then unloaded and passed around the fall with the aid of a kind of creeper, and secured in a protected little bay close to the bank, when our cargo was reloaded and the journey resumed. While on this rock I secured a large kind of hornet, about two inches in length, of a peculiarly bright green colour, the sting of which was about a quarter of an inch long. I preserved it for a long time, but it was unfortunately lost, and I was never able to secure another specimen.

After passing two more rapids I noticed that the Indians became a little excited, and shortly after, on the fourteenth day from the time we left the launch, I noticed cultivated ground, and we were soon at the end of our journey, having arrived at the junction of two rivers which form the Tamaya. Here also was the village of the caucheros, who, although it was only a temporary camp, had given it the name of Putaya.

CHAPTER VI

INCIDENTS IN THE TAMAYA

The rubber village—Strange pets—Shipping rubber—Voyage on a raft—Its construction—Shooting the rapids—A lucky shot—The mouth of the Shahuanha—Cunibos Indians—Short of food—Mutiny—Lost in the bush—Rescue after eight days—Three months with the Chama Indians—Their customs and habits—Beliefs—Marriage ceremonies—Recovery—Return to civilization—A slave deal—Indian heads—Dangers of disclosure—An intoxicated captain—Arrival at Iquitos.

HAVING made known the purpose of my journey, I was offered accommodation for myself and Indians, and after a good meal and excellent coffee, I turned out to see the camp and also the quantity of caucho we should be likely to carry down the river.

From every hut that I passed there was an invitation to enter, some of the occupants desiring to know at what price we were purchasing. I made some very good deals, eventually buying more than our launch could carry. The huts were only small temporary structures, some twelve feet in height at the ridge pole, built of cane, and with some pretensions to taste, an equal distance being kept between each one. They were built on the four sides of a hollow square, and the open space in the centre, of some sixty yards square, was well kept, and was used as a playing ground for all the children in the camp. In every cottage there were pets of every description, captured in the bush, parrots, parakeets, monkeys, peccaries, coatis, and a bird called "trumpetero," about the size of a hen, and not unlike a dwarf emu. There were also game birds of every description, and small singing birds galore, one pair in particular, of a pale blue colour, following me everywhere, perching on my shoulders and cap. These birds are locally known as "sui-sui," or violinista, owing to their notes, which are not unlike those made on a squeaking violin. The various kinds of "mutum" were well represented, principally "jacu," or puca-kunga, meaning red throat in Quechua.

There were no Indians here, that is, none but those of Quechua or allied origin, brought from Iquitos to work as caucheros. Most of them were content, having found plenty of caucho, and very few were in debt to their "patrons" or masters.

On the fifth day the launch was heard blowing her siren below the lower rapids, and one of her boats soon arrived with the news that, owing to the shallow water, it would be necessary for all the rubber ready for shipment to be brought to the rapids in boats or floated down, and the merchandise carried up stream by the same means.

This was a long and tedious matter, occupying about three days and nights, and when the launch had taken on board as much as she could safely carry, in the event of the river not rising, it was decided that she should sail immediately, leaving me to take charge of the floating down of some twelve tons of caucho. Poles were cut, about twenty feet long, of a kind of setico called "palo de balsa," or raft wood, a very soft, light wood, unsinkable, and like cork, capable of supporting great weight in the water. About twenty of these poles were cut and placed alongside each other, held in position by three cross-pieces of a strong but pliant shrub, and the whole then bound together by thick and resilient fibres called by the caucheros "tamshi." The rolls of caucho were then placed on the raft, and, in their turn, secured, to prevent their being washed off the raft in the event of an accident.

The evening of the day following the departure of the launch saw myself and the Indians who had come with me on the upward journey, ready to push our way into the force of the fall, and, everything being ready, the raft was impelled into the rush of water, and with a bump and a jerk we were down the fall and into the rapids, being twirled and twisted about, at times up to our waist in water. Luckily the passage occupied only about five minutes, and we were soon in quiet water, floating gently down the stream, which carried us at about five miles an hour. The raft required very little managing beyond being fended from the banks at the curves of the stream and protected from fallen trees which lay in the bed of the river.

We stopped neither day nor night, sleeping and cooking on the raft. Owing to the fact that the raft made no noise in descending, we came upon several herds of peccaries feeding on the banks, and on one occasion dropped upon a fine anta (*Tapirus Americanus*) as he was swimming across the river. He did not hear our approach, and paid for his carelessness with a charge of buckshot in the shoulder.

We got him on board the raft, and for the rest of that trip I had all the fresh meat I could eat. The flesh of this animal is very like beef, and is very sustaining and palatable, though hard to digest. From its hide the whips are made which are used for the flogging of peons and others, a practice common in the country.

On the fourth day of our journey down river we came upon the launch stuck hard and fast on a sand-bank at the mouth of a small river called the Shahuanha, which has never been explored, owing to the presence of bands of dangerous savages, probably some of the Cunibos.

All attempts at floating the launch being unavailing, and the river having again begun to fall, poles were cut and wedged against the sides, in order to keep the launch upright, and we settled down to await another rise in the river.

Our food supply was now reduced, lard, salt, and other necessaries were especially low, while potatoes and flour were completely exhausted. Our condition was not a very enviable one, for, although game was abundant, we had no vegetables, nor any bread or biscuits to go with meat, so we were obliged to rely entirely upon the young inner shoots of the "assahy" or cabbage palm, or those of the bottle palm (*Iriartea ventricosa*). To make matters worse, discontent broke out among the crew, by now becoming impatient at the many delays and the length of the voyage, and it was difficult to induce them to go into the bush in search of game, of which they had become tired, yearning for their homely dishes of plantain and yuca (*Manihot utilissima*).

On one of these occasions, after a futile effort to get the men to hunt, I determined to try my luck, though I had very little knowledge of the bush at that time, and, accompanied by the captain, the two of us armed ourselves with double-barrelled shot-guns and the usual small, short machete. We had gone but a short distance when we disturbed a large band of monkeys, and it was quickly arranged that I was to remain while my companion made his way round the troop until we got them between our guns, I to withhold my fire until his first shot, and then to drive them back upon him. However, I must have become excited and unconsciously followed the monkeys a little way, desirous of increasing my " bag " of three, but, giving up the chase, I realized that I had strayed some little distance from where the captain had left me. At this moment I heard two shots a long way off to my right, and picking up my spoil, I made my way in the direction of the shots. After some ten minutes I discharged my gun twice, and got a reply away on my left, apparently at a distance. This caused me to change my direction, and at the same time to become flurried. I kept on in my new direction for about an hour and again discharged my gun, this time receiving no response. Darkness was beginning to fall, and I realized that I should have to spend the night in the forest. I sat down on a log and, thinking a smoke would help me to take a more cheerful view of circumstances, I looked into my ammunition pouch, and found that I had no tobacco and only two or three matches. These I used in trying to make a fire, but succeeded only in charring some thin sticks, and thus my hopes of the cheering effect of a fire were also shattered. I found that I had only sufficient powder to charge my gun twice, so taking advantage of the little remaining light, I prepared both barrels of the gun, and felt a little cheered with the satisfaction that in the event of my being molested by any of the animals which I had heard inhabited the forest, I, at least, would be able to defend myself.

I was clad only in a shirt and pants, and at an early hour of the night began to feel cold, hungry, and thirsty; but making up my mind that if I did not move any further search parties would soon find me in the morning, I dropped into a sound sleep, from which I was awakened in the early daylight by the movement of a large animal close to me. Sitting up, and with my gun ready, I prepared to get a shot at the intruder, and beheld a very large animal of the armadillo species. He appeared to me to be a great size, some two feet high and three feet long, and though I had seen and even eaten small ones I have never since seen one of this particular species.

Just about 6 a.m. I could hear the siren of the launch being blown at short intervals for about an hour, but although I travelled a long time I could get no nearer, so raising my gun, in order to call the attention of search parties, I exploded my last two charges. I again received no reply, so abandoning the gun in order to make quicker progress I began again to travel in the direction of the launch, but without coming out upon the river banks, and apparently no nearer, for I was now on high ground, which showed a tendency to continue. I had now been in the bush some twenty-four hours, during which time I had not thought of food or water. Still having my machete, I cut down a small assaye palm and consumed the delicate inner leaves, and also some of the ripe berries which I found at the foot of other palm trees, mostly of the aguaji or mirity. My next thought was of water, so making my way down the sides of the high ground, I soon came to a small stream and refreshed myself with a draught of really fresh, pure cold water. I also bathed my body and, feeling thoroughly refreshed, sat down in a spot of sunshine, and thought of my chances of ever getting out of my predicament. Being quite exhausted, I fell asleep, and upon waking found the day changed to night, and the sky beautifully lit up by the moon and stars. Judging from the height of the moon, I imagined that it was then about midnight, and turning upon my side, in order to keep from worrying, I tried to get to sleep again, in which I was somewhat successful, but was handicapped by severe abdominal pains, probably as a result of eating the palm leaves or the heavy draughts of cold water.

The next morning I was much worse and troubled greatly with diarrhœa, followed in the afternoon by chills and fever. With the idea of keeping warm, I kept on walking, but was obliged eventually to rest, so high had the temperature of my blood become. From this time on until my discovery I have only a faint idea of continually meeting with animals in the bush which did not molest me, and repeatedly, upon finding water, immersing my body, in a vain effort to reduce the fever.

I still remember how, in one lucid interval, I found myself on the banks of the river, and, making my way to a large sand-bank, I constructed a small shelter of wild cane, and, throwing myself down upon the sand, in the shade of my rough hut, I resigned myself to God, absolutely without hope of rescue, yet quite prepared for my end.

I do not know how long I lay on the bank, but afterwards learned that my rescue was effected under the following circumstances, on the ninth day after my entrance to the bush.

The captain of the launch, when he found that I had become separated from him, presumed that I had made my way back to the launch, but was surprised to find that he was mistaken. During the night the river rose rapidly, so having ordered steam to be prepared, he dispatched two search parties, at the same time causing the siren to be blown at intervals. After the lapse of about an hour one of the parties had returned with my gun, and, thinking that the worst had happened to me, he made his way down river. Arriving at the Peruvian house whence I had commenced my journey with the Chamas, my loss in the bush was well advertised, but no one imagined that any purpose would be served in sending out more parties, but the Chamas who had accompanied me seemed to take some interest, and, having been told where I had gone into the bush, they expressed their intention of searching. It was these men who, making their way up stream, came upon my rough shelter, and found me in a highly delirious state from the strength of the fever which had attacked me.

They carried me to their own village, and did all they could to cure me, in which, luckily, they were quite successful. But my shock on first regaining consciousness at finding that I was among Indians caused a relapse from which I was a long time in recovering.

I spent altogether about three months among these people, who gave me every attention, and later, when I was convalescent, allowed me to roam about their "malocas," but would never allow me to enter the bush. One day, while dozing in a fibre hammock with which they had furnished me, I was surprised by whisperings outside the tent, and was delighted at the entrance of the five men who had been my companions. They had been in the village all the time, but owing to my excited state had not been allowed to see me. These apparently half-savage people realized that excitement would perhaps have caused me to lose my reason, to prevent which they had allowed me to remain quiet, and had refrained from questioning me. At that time I must have been weak in the head, for it never occurred to me until I had met my Indian friends but that I was in the hands of people to whom I was unknown. Comforted by daily talks with the old man Benito, my improvement was very rapid. He spoke a little Spanish, and had been baptized by the priest when a child, but yet had no idea of religion as we Christians know it. I learned that he was the head and founder of that particular tribe. They are moon worshippers, but the ritual of sun worship plays an important part in their religion. Their devil or bad spirit is an awful being who is supposed to exist in the heart of the bush and in every lake and river. They propitiate this spirit with gifts of meat and so forth left in the bush or thrown into the rivers.

Each individual is given the name of some animal, bird, fish, or plant, and they believe that at death their bodies take on some other form, governed by their lives, a strong and treacherous male becoming a wild beast, and a weak and timid one taking up his being in the animal which most resembles him in character. These people never kill the deer with which the forest abounds, as they believe that the animal possesses supernatural properties. They are very clever in certain arts, notably the weaving of fibre hammocks, pottery, the making up of feathers, and the carving of their arrows for fishing paiche, sea cow and turtle, and the larger fish which inhabit the lakes and rivers.

The village was situated on the edge of one of the large cochas or lakes, the largest I have seen in the Amazon Valley. I should judge that from the village to the other side, where the lake ended at the foot of a low range of hills, would be some thirty miles. The hills I recognized as being those behind Chantamayo, referred to in an earlier chapter. Benito told me that he had never crossed, owing to the demon which lived in the lake, and drew to the depths any canoe or other object which arrived at the centre of the lake. I would like to have assured myself of this, as I presume that there must have been a whirlpool marking the site of a subterranean outlet.

One day while among these people I saw several young men wrestling and tumbling about, surrounded by a crowd of young women and boys. Calling old Benito, I pointed this out to him, but he only smiled, and taking me by the arm asked me to go with him to see the performers, who, as he informed me, were training for their wedding day.

Upon nearing them I saw that each held in his palm one of the small knives made by these people, and was then made aware of their real purpose. Four youths were presumably trying to break through the defence of a tall, finely built young Indian, the object being to inflict a superficial flesh wound upon his body, which they had failed to do, their own bodies streaming with blood bearing eloquent testimony to the skill of the victor.

The following day several other youths repeated the performance, and so on for several days, a proceeding which I could not understand. Benito, however, eventually enlightened me. It appears that the young Indian desired to take as his wife a young woman of the tribe, and, according to custom, in order to win her he was obliged to fight any young man who desired her, or any Indian nominated by the father, as a proof of his love to his daughter and to show that he wished to keep her, all of which was purely ceremony.

Some few days after the incidents above described I noticed great excitement on the part of the members of the tribes, and learned that there was to be a big dance on the night of the first full moon, when our young Indian friend was to be married. I was fortunate enough, unknown to all but Benito, to see the whole of the ceremony, which took place in a large open space, in the centre of which a big fire had been made, and several smaller fires to form a square. Men and women were in an intoxicated state, produced by partaking of a strong drink, made from mandioc (*Manihot utilissima*), but the young Indian kept his head clear. At a late hour of the night, among a burst of small drums and peculiar whistles used by the men and women, the young Indian stepped into the centre of the square, and was followed by another big specimen of manhood. Both wore nothing but a loin strap, and, at a given signal, took up a crouching position, each ready for the first move of his antagonist. Creeping slowly round one another, they were soon indistinguishable among a whirl of arms and legs, out of which presently emerged one of the girl's champions with one side of his face hanging down on to his breast, and all smeared with blood. He was taken in charge by the medicine men, who joined the cut portions together and covered the whole with a red clay, and, after several other futile efforts to damage the young lover, he abandoned the contest, and the lover was declared to have proved his ability to defend her and take her to wife. The bride was brought out in charge of a number of old women hags and informed of this fact.

The young girl was in a frightfully intoxicated condition, and was not immediately given into the charge of her new lord, for this does not occur until about the fourth day. After being carried away by the elderly women, she could be heard screaming in a heartrending manner. I learned later that it is a custom among this people for the women attending the bride to remove the clitoris. After the operation the organ is packed with the red clay to which they attribute special medicinal virtues. The wound having healed, the clay soon dries and falls away. The bride is then considered fit to fulfil the duties of a wife and rule the household of her lord.

Having now been with the Indians some three months, and feeling quite restored to health and strength, I expressed a desire to be taken to a settlement where I could find means of returning to Iquitos; and a few days subsequently

I took my leave of these Indian friends, who had cared for me and restored me to health and strength. Crossing one corner of the lake, we travelled for about three days down a very small stream, and coming into another small lake we were soon at the mouth of the main river again.

Here I was enabled to purchase a good supply of presents for my companions, and bidding them good-bye and thanking them for all they had done for me, I embarked on a small launch bound down river for Iquitos, the captain of which, learning of my adventure, assisted me with the presents for the Indians, and also gave them a demijohn of aguardiente, a good pull of which I took in order to satisfy my Indian acquaintances.

Shortly after embarking on the launch we were stopped by signals from a large "batelon," or boat, which was being impelled rapidly in our direction, and we were shortly boarded by a short, brutal-looking man, apparently a Turk or Syrian. I did not pay any attention to his conversation with the captain, but saw money and goods change hands, apparently in part payment for two Indian girls, one about seven and the other about three years of age. I was surprised to find that this was so, but it was confirmed by the captain, who called me into his cabin to show me his purchase. This consisted of two preserved Indian heads, a fine boa constrictor skin, and these poor Indian children, all of which he had bought for about £15 from the Arab. He seemed fairly well satisfied with his purchase, but expressed the hope that he was not going to lose any money by the deal, as the children had only been taken from the bush a few days, and owing to their apparent fear could not be induced to eat. Day by day they became more emaciated, and were eventually sold to an elderly lady, proprietress of a large farm, who I learned made a bad bargain, as the children quickly succumbed, more probably from grief than anything else. Yet in view of these purchases and re-sales of Indian children, being so much a local custom, and as such tolerated and protected, it would be an extremely dangerous matter to attempt any disclosure of these things while still in the country. This I am sure could be borne out by others, did they care to come forward, and by so doing relieve themselves somewhat of the weight which must lie upon their consciences.

Nothing more of note occurred on this trip beyond the almost continual state of intoxication habitual to our friend the captain. Arriving in Iquitos, I had the pleasure of being very well received by my employers, who had given me up for dead. They relieved me of all duties for a month, furnished me with all kinds of good fare, and made me a monetary present. With the balance of salaries due to me, I was in a fairly good way, and was induced to listen to the wiles of an Iquitos merchant. He persuaded me to enter into business on my own account in a village known to him though unknown to me. He assured me that the facilities and prospects were great for a man like myself with a small capital. He agreed to double my capital by allowing me credit to the amount of some 5000 soles, a promise which worked all to his advantage and resulted in my being completely ruined.

CHAPTER VII

EXPERIENCES AS A TRADER AND CAUCHERO

Established at Nauta—Description—Trade—A trying sickness—Its cure—Native remedies—The cura—Cokama Indians—An abandoned prelate—The Governor—Religious observances—Examples of peonage—A voyage to the Tigre.

IN the month of May, 1906, and about eighteen months after my arrival in Iquitos, I took my leave of this place and embarked upon a small launch, my destination being Nauta, a small town situated in a creek formed by a dried-up arm of the main river, the River Huallaga. The creek empties into the north side of the river, about five miles above its confluence with the River Ucayali.

The town or village itself is formed at a distance of about a mile from the mouth of the creek, and is rarely visited by the larger class of river steamers.

It is one of the oldest towns on the Upper Amazon and at one time was exceedingly prosperous, being the final point of call of the Amazon Steamship Co.'s boat some twenty or thirty years ago, when it did a great trade in the exportation of dried paiche, vaca marina, and raw rubber, and would perhaps have rivalled Iquitos, were it not for the river suddenly changing its course, thereby leaving Nauta without any communication by water, beyond the small and narrow creek, useless for large river steamers.

There are some very fine old houses in the town, relics of its prosperous days, and the streets are well laid out. The house which the author occupied was an old rambling one-story building, constructed on two sides of a hollow square, with sides of about forty yards measurement. The remainder of the ground not taken up by the buildings formed a very fine old-world garden, well planted with large trees, principally mango, which gave a very welcome shade for one's chair or hammock.

The walls of the house were built of "adobes," large mud bricks about twenty-four inches square, and though perhaps forty years old were in an excellent state of preservation.

Fronting the house, and in the village square, was the parish church, a large mud building in a very bad state of repair, and the resting-place of goats and cattle, the former of which are the great plague of the town, owing to their climbing proclivities and destructive habits. The town possessed two small schools, one for boys and the other for girls, where they were given a purely rudimentary education, beyond which stage they rarely, if ever, get.

On the day of my arrival in the town I was suffering from a high fever, and before leaving Iquitos had been confined to my room, advised by a doctor to postpone my journey, as I was presumably suffering from gastric fever. For many reasons I could not see my way to do this. I kept up long enough to attend to the disembarkation of my merchandise and effects, on the completion of which I collapsed, and was carried to a house near at hand, and given into the charge of an old woman practising as a herbalist, locally known as a "curandeira." I remained in a dangerously delirious state for about three days, but very soon, under this woman's care, recovered sufficiently to inquire about my goods, which had been left on the river bank.

I was quickly assured that they were being taken care of by her son-in-law, who had caused everything to be carried to my store and the premises made quite secure.

I remained in the care of this good old soul some three weeks, during the whole of which time I received no other medicines beyond the various infusions of plants extracted from the bush by this woman herself.

Her primary treatment had consisted of small doses of latex of a tree locally named "ojea" by the Peruvians, and known to the Brazilians as "caixinguba." This when administered in small doses is a very violent purgative, and is also a febrifuge. I was given water to drink in which a quantity of the bark of a tree known as remo caspi had been soaked. This imparted to the water a steely bluish tint, not unlike paraffin, and gave it a very bitter taste, similar to quassia or quinine. Some leaves, about the size and shape of our English dock-leaf, were damped with aguardiente and placed around my head, taking the place of ice. The cooling and refreshing effect obtained by the application of these leaves was really remarkable. Other medicine plants were used during my cure, but I was not able to ascertain their names or use.

Upon being restored to health again, I, with some assistance, laid out my stock of goods and awaited my first customer. This was the cura, and my first business with him was anything but profitable. Another man finished several bottles of beer, and carried away two bottles of wine and a bottle of whisky. He never bought anything at my store, but occasionally would bring to my establishment, at late hours of the night, sundry of his companions, when, if I was foolish enough to open, I should be obliged to attend to them for several hours, on many occasions without the slightest hope of payment.

Some will ask why I did not refrain from business such as this, but the fact to be borne in mind is that the rubber estate owners or their satellites could by a single word cause the Cokamas or other local inhabitants to do their business with a competitor. By putting up with the inconvenience of trading with them, I could always rely on a fair share of the local trade, which was of course my object in having established myself in the town.

It was common talk in various towns that certain local priests did not use wine at the altar during the Mass, preferring aguardiente or other strong liquor. I came across one who would never attend his church for the performance of service on the many feast days without stipulating that he must be carried there, owing to the fact that he was almost continually under the influence of liquor, and I never saw him perform a baptism, wedding, or similar ceremony without his being so intoxicated as to be bestial in the extreme. Another was rarely in his diocese, spending the greater part of his time travelling on the river steamers, gambling with dice with whomever he could find, and it is a fact that his methods were not always of the best.

However, it must be placed on record, in justice to the majority of the priests in the region, that these are the only cases of indiscretion which came under my notice, for, as a rule, the Roman Catholic missionaries are hard-working, zealous Christian men.

I have known cases of priests performing the marriage of children in their early teens, but owing to representations made by several of the Governors of districts, this practice is now on the decrease, due in great part to the efforts of a young, well-educated Peruvian of high ideals, who was at one time Governor of the town, and as such headed a newspaper campaign in Iquitos, which had as its object the prevention of marriages between immature children and the betterment of the conditions under which the Indians in the neighbourhood existed, particularly in the rubber forests of an influential member of the local church.

The owner of the largest "seringal," or rubber estate, in the surrounding country employed some five hundred persons, mostly Cokama Indians, who, with one or two exceptions, were the worst examples of peonage I have encountered. Not only were they obliged to work rubber in the season, but were forced to labour all the year, at anything and everything required of them, without any remuneration. They were debited with everything purchased by them, even to rent of canoes, and other tools and necessities required by them in order to carry out their work, but received credit occasionally for a proportion of the rubber, dried fuel, or vegetables delivered by them. Most of these unfortunates were in debt to the extent of £100 or more, after being in their employer's service almost a lifetime, and having no effects but what could be got into any ordinary portmanteau, and this after their master or owner, for such he considered himself, had made a huge fortune, without the slightest personal effort on his own part.

This system of exploiting the native labourer is not confined to the owner in question, but is the rule all over the country, and is slowly but surely causing the destruction of the Indian, civilized or otherwise. Can it be wondered at that a system like this, slavery under the name of peonage, should be denied by the Government concerned when the representatives of a Christian Church are to be found among the protectors of the system, and are the worst exploiters of the passive natives?

Many of my readers have no doubt seen and taken part in one of the prettiest rituals in the Church of Rome, namely that during Easter week, when the images of Christ and the Virgin Mary are carried in procession, and in a manner so full of religious fervour that it appeals to all creeds. Compare it with the procession in Nauta, where the sacred relics were carried by civilized people in a state of advanced intoxication, and in a fanatical mood, headed by the priest in his robes, and followed by natives, whose feelings had been so played upon as to flay themselves and one another with whips which had pieces of broken glass and even metal attached to them, in order to cause greater flow of blood; all this as evidence of their "great religious fervour"! Can a native subject to such "elevating" religious influences hope to get out of the clutches of his taskmasters, unless he is helped by some outside influence?

It must be borne in mind that the events above described occurred in the years 1906 and 1907, at a distance of less than seventy miles from a town like Iquitos. The facts were so well known, and vouched for in Peruvian newspapers, that it seems a ridiculous farce for anyone to suggest that such happenings are unknown to the authorities, when the advent of a dancer, or the knowledge of the existence of a pretty face or two, would be quite sufficient to bring them into any outlying district, like bees round a honey jar.

In this town, however, I made a good living, for as I held aloof from all controversial argument, my presence was tolerated, although I was considered an infidel. In time I was enabled to strike out as an employer of labour. It came about in the following manner: The Governor, with whom I was very friendly, visited my store and inquired if I could do with two or three or even more native labourers, and upon my acquiescing, suggested a plan which would entail the sinking of all the capital at my command. It was arranged that I should give employment to any labourers who cared to work for me, in which case I would assume the responsibility of their debts. When their accounts were presented to me for payment, and as is the rule with an insignificant amount placed to the credit of the labourer, I arranged that the man's account was to be submitted to the Governor for registration. The Governor ordered the man to be questioned in his presence respecting the length of time he had been working, the amount paid by him in any ordinary store for articles of clothing, provisions, etc., which composed the greater part of his debt. He was able in every case to cancel the man's debt owing to shortage of credit for work performed, and the excessive debit for purchases made by him.

One of the young Indian men who came to work for me showed an account current from his master demonstrating that he was in debt to the extent of some £170. He had entered the service of this master with a supposed debt of $900 (Peruvian), which the patron had paid, less 33⅓ per cent, but the Indian's account current showed an original debit of the $900 plus 20 per cent commission, and although he had been working several months absolutely nothing stood to his credit for services rendered, but there were many debits, consisting of such items as one fish-hook, six feet of fishing cord, etc., and maintenance during several days that he had been too ill to work.

However, the Governor saw to it that justice was done. In this particular case, owing to the absence of any document showing how the sum was arrived at, he struck out the original debt, and ordered the peon to be paid at the rate of \$30 per month (\$1 is about 2s.). This gave him a balance in his favour, which was paid to him in the presence of the Governor.

In this way I got together a fine lot of young Indians and their families, but not before I gave an undertaking to pay them a fair wage, with good working hours and conditions, and a copy of their accounts every three months, which was to be presented to the Governor for approval.

This system worked well, for if any labourer refused to perform a task required of him, a word or two from the Governor, showing him that he did not deserve any consideration from a good master, would always send the malcontent back to work with a will. Eventually, I had so many labourers working for me in agricultural and similar pursuits, all of whom had come to know me well, and to trust and respect me, that I decided to make a trip, at the men's own suggestion, to the higher reaches of the River Tigre, well into Equatorial territory. Placing my store and business in the hands of a manager, I purchased a number of canoes for the journey, and dividing the merchandise, food, tools, and so forth in the various craft, of which I had arranged to take about twelve, I started upon my journey with about fifty-eight men and fourteen women, the remainder of the women and children being left behind until our return, in order to look after and cultivate their chacaras.

The journey from Nauta to the mouth of the River Tigre occupied us about five days. Here it was broken in order to lay in a good supply of fresh and cured fish, to be used when the men in charge of the rifles and shot-guns were not able to supply fresh meat for all.

Leaving the mouth of the river on the third day we commenced our ascent of the Tigre. The first part of the journey was entirely uneventful, no fish, game, or turtle falling to our hand.

Our food during the early days consisted of yucas, plantains, vegetables, fresh meat and fish, bought and sometimes caught *en route*. For ten days our progress was slow, owing to the strong current and the canoes being heavily laden. Another factor was our continued delays for rest and the purchase of food, in order to save our provisions for the journey in the sparsely inhabited River Tigre, where it would be difficult to purchase anything, except at rare intervals.

CHAPTER VIII

A YEAR UP THE TIGRE WITH THE RUBBER GATHERERS

The voyage from the mouth—The floods—Modes of navigation—A forest camp—Vegetable ivory—The piranha and other fishes—The terror of the water, "candiru"—The inhambu and other birds—More fine fish—Turtles and turtle eggs—Method of spearing turtle—Spears and other implements described—Peculiarities of the turtle—Arrival at Peruvian frontier—The frontier post—An alligator dinner—The higher reaches—Rocky banks—Huangana Yacu—A difficult creek—Arrival at the lake—Formation of base camp—Organization of cauchero—Method of discovering cauchero—How extracted—How treated—Average production—The life of the master—Shortage of food—Preparations for return—Construction of rafts—Initiation of the voyage to Iquitos—A dangerous snake—Arrival at Nauta—Bad news—Continuation to Iquitos—Flight of peon—The pursuit—Arrival at River Javary—Up the Javary to the Curassow—Eight days in a creek—Encounter with rubber workers—A bitter disappointment—A common commercial trick—Arrangements for a voyage to Manaos by raft.

I HAD constantly to bear in mind the question of provisions, as I had been advised that owing to the flooding of the lower grounds, the result of a small rise caused by heavy rain in the upper reaches, the crops in many places had been damaged. These rises of a river are called "repiquetes" when occurring after the principal floods have subsided, and are not governed by any regular climatic condition as are the annual rise and fall.

They occasionally cause much damage to plantations of corn, beans, mandioc, etc., where the natives try to take advantage of the large sand-banks and low lands, which they often do, as this saves the cutting of brush and its corresponding labour.

The sand-banks are easily planted and produce good crops, retaining as they do a certain amount of moisture from the river, which keeps the sand loose, allows the roots to develop, and requires no weeding. On the sand-banks of the rivers forming the higher reaches extensive crops of beans, mandioc, maize, water melons, and pumpkins are grown every year, as they produce better results than are obtained from prepared ground. This is due to the rich alluvial soil deposited upon them by the river, in the course of its never-ending erosions.

Having travelled about five days, during which time we had been unable to cook a single meal or boil water, or even sleep in any manner in the canoes, owing to the river having overflowed its low banks, we entered a zone of high ground where the river's banks were high and well wooded. Coming to the mouth of a small stream about three o'clock in the afternoon where some previous travellers had cleared a small space in the shade of two large trees, one of which was a fine "massaranduba" (*Mimusops balata*) and the other a large "sapucaia" (*Lecythis allaria*), I gave orders for the canoes to be stopped and camp prepared. This was a very necessary proceeding, as men and women were showing traces of suffering, the latter from the forced position which is their lot on long canoe journeys.

When all the canoes arrived I ordered the men to construct "tambos," small, rough huts covered with the leaves of the yarina or vegetable ivory palm, while the women got ready cooking utensils, etc., so that we could all have substantial meals and a day's rest.

Some of the men got out their fishing lines and soon had a good supply of fish from the stream, consisting mainly of several kinds of bearded cat-fish, piraña, and others. The " piranha " (or piraña) is a fish which varies in weight from six ounces to as much as four pounds. It is oval in shape, with beautiful silvery scales covered with small black spots. Round the gills it is distinguished by a pretty red colouring, while the belly and tail are of the same tint.

But pretty as is this fish, it is greatly feared by all river dwellers, owing to its powerful and heavily toothed jaws and its voracious habits, it being particularly partial to raw flesh, and hundreds will be attracted in a few moments by fresh blood. They are hard to catch, for they so frequently bite through even large strong hooks, and in order to prevent this, it is customary to reinforce the shanks with some pliable tin or other metal. Many cases are known of wounded animals and even humans being literally consumed alive by these fish before they could be taken out of the water. It is exceedingly dangerous to bathe when they are present, or even to wash one's hands or feet in the water while sitting in the canoe, for it would be a simple invitation to their carnivorous tastes which they would readily accept, and one would be a finger or toe the loser for the experience, while no man would think of bathing in the naked state. However, pugnacious as they are, they are really good eating, so are not useless, as apparently is another terror of the water called " candiru." This is a small fish sometimes attaining a length of two inches. Just behind the gills it has two barbs, which, when they enter any orifice of the body, open out and act as do the barbs of an arrow, thereby impeding easy withdrawal or expulsion.

Although I have never personally seen a case of sickness due to the proclivity of this fish, I do know that in every place which I visited in my travels I have heard of its dangerous character, and am convinced that the river dwellers do speak truthfully when warning one not to be careless of avoiding this danger.

While some of the men were fishing, three others took their shot-guns and went into the bush, returning in a short time with several toucans and two fine partridge-like birds called "inhambu" (*crypturns*). These, along with the fish, formed the basis of a fine satisfying meal, which was concluded with plenty of good black coffee.

When I retired to my hut to rest I found that some of the men had cut down an assayi palm, and then divided it into lengths about six feet each. Three of these rolls or logs were put into the tent and the remainder, beaten flat with the axes, were laid on top, whilst some of the leaves of the same palm tree placed tip to tip were laid on one side and formed a cosy mattress, over which I spread my rubber-coated sheet and a blanket, the whole resulting in an ingenious and restful bed.

The following morning I rose very late but thoroughly refreshed, and found that the men had not been idle. They had made out of palm leaves coverings for the canoes called "pamacaris," laying them on arched twigs secured to the sides of the canoes. They proved very useful, affording protection from the rain and sun for ourselves and such of the food-stuffs likely to suffer damage from rain. Others had cut slabs of massaranduba and were making new paddles for their canoes, while one of them whom I had contracted only as a fisherman was making a lance from the same material. We remained in this camp until the following morning, when, after ordering the men in the leading canoe to stop at a good place for camp at about five in the afternoon, I got into my own canoe, which was the last one to leave. It is a wise precaution when conducting canoes on long journeys to travel last, as thereby the falling behind of canoes is prevented, and in case of accidents one is always behind to give help.

The evening of that particular day we encamped on a sand-bank quite two miles long and almost a mile broad. My canoe party arriving last, found the camp completed and the evening meal only awaiting our arrival. The men in the leading canoe had caught plenty of fine fish with the cast net, chief among which were toucanare, corvina, and some fish known as palometas. The first-named is one of the finest fish found in the rivers ; the second is also a fine fish, in appearance and in taste not unlike whiting, but having the novelty of two pearl-like stony growths in its head. The palometa is a very handsome flat silvery scaled fish, and is a purely vegetable feeder.

After dispatching a good meal, I, along with several of the men, went for a stroll along the sand-bank in search of signs of turtles or the smaller species of tracaja.

At the extreme end of the sand-bank there were many turtle tracks in the sand, and we dug in several places where it had been disturbed by them in the making of the cavities wherein to deposit their eggs.

I found that by walking barefoot I could easily distinguish the places where turtles' eggs had been deposited, as the foot sinks slightly into the sand. This I should imagine to be due to the fact that the eggs are not hard-shelled and give way slightly under pressure. The first nest that I dug up contained about one hundred and twenty eggs, the production of a single turtle. The eggs are perfectly round and are about the size of a golf ball. They have no hard shell, but are protected by a firm elastic skin of a greyish-white colour. The yolk is of about the consistency of an ordinary hard-boiled hen's egg, but the white does not set when cooked. They are mostly eaten raw, the yolk only being used mixed with a little farina and seasoned according to taste. They are very sustaining food, though fatty and hard to digest, and are much used by voyagers owing to the fact that they require no cooking.

We got altogether about a thousand eggs, but the men and women of the party consumed them in less than three days, and there were no more to be had until we arrived at another sand-bank favoured by the turtles.

When the river begins to fall turtles leave the lakes where they have been during the floods and start to ascend the river, literally hundreds of thousands of them. When this happens they are much pursued by the river dwellers, who hunt them with harpoons, bows and arrows, and it is a common thing to see hundreds of canoes along the river's banks, each one containing its occupant ready with bow and arrow to shoot at the turtles as they rise to breathe. The harpoon head as a rule contains a socket into which fits the sharpened end of the lance, this being a shaft of palm-tree wood, massaranduba, or other heavy timber from ten to twelve feet long and tapering slightly from its centre to the ends, which have a diameter of about half an inch, the centre where the lance is grasped being about one inch in diameter. The harpoon is secured to a long cord which passes through a loop about the centre of the lance shaft, and upon striking its object it becomes detached and the wooden part rises to the surface of the water, acting as a buoy or float.

The bow and arrow used in turtle fishing are adjuncts to the lance and harpoon above described. The bow is made of the wood of the " chonta " palm (*Bactris ciliata*) or other hard, resilient wood, and is about six feet long. The arrow head is as a rule a piece of pointed square metal about one and a half inches long, with small barbs cut into its edges. It is secured by means of wax and thread to a piece of hard wood attached to a socket into which the shaft of the arrow loosely fits. From the iron to the mouth of the socket there are grooves round which a thin line is wound in the same manner as that employed to give the spin to a peg-top, but as the socket has room for only about three feet, the remainder of the line of some fifteen to twenty feet is closely wound round the arrow shaft and secured.

The shaft of the arrow is made of the stalk of the flowers of " canarana " (*Generium segitatum*), common all along the banks of the rivers, and is tipped with feather. The bow and arrow are used for shooting at the turtle at a distance, the barb when striking the shell of the turtle causing the arrow to become released from its socket. As the arrow is extremely buoyant the twine quickly becomes unwound, allowing the shaft to rise to the surface of the water. The hunter then paddles slowly out, and hauling the line taut, is guided by its angle in calculating the position of his prize. Taking the heavy harpoon and lance with its stronger cord, he throws it with great force in the turtle's direction, and if his aim has been good he has the satisfaction of knowing that his turtle is now secure and can be hauled into the canoe with ease. Once aboard it is thrown upon its back in the bottom of the canoe, and its flappers secured to prevent injury to the occupant.

It is not generally known that turtles do not lay their eggs on any sand-bank, but return always to the same ground. It is stated by the Indians that the female does not lay any eggs until the male has marked out the limits of the ground chosen by him as suitable for the purpose, and, no matter how cramped they may be for room, they never lay their eggs outside the limits of the space marked out by him. This is a peculiarity known to all the river dwellers, to Indians employed in the turtle-fishing industry, and to the guards employed by the Local Governments in the protection of the sand-banks favoured by the turtles.

During this particular journey up the River Tigre I saw many of both the large and the small species of turtle, and the fisherman attached to the expedition kept us well supplied with a small kind called tracajá caught by him as they basked in the sun on logs or on the large sand-banks, and we were never short of the eggs of this species. They are of the size and shape of those of our English lapwing, but with the same skin covering and colour of those of the large turtle.

On the fourteenth day of our voyage we arrived at the Peruvian frontier, where we found an official known as the Commissary accompanied by about ten soldiers and two sergeants. The houses were situated on good high ground and were surrounded by a good clearing, but there were very few signs of cultivation.

The Commissary informed me that he was running short of stores, so I furnished him with sugar, tea, salt, some rice and beans, and a good supply of fresh meat. He had plenty of aguardiente, and having indulged with him in several drinks, I did not feel disposed to continue my journey that day, so I ordered the men to put up their camp for the night on the river bank, close to the canoes, and the Commissary accommodated me with a place for my hammock. While talking with him over the evening meal he got me to promise to stay the following day and allow my men to hunt and fish in order to replenish his larder, a request I did not care to refuse, for it is very necessary to avoid displeasing any local authority, who can if he pleases make things very disagreeable without the vaguest grounds for so doing.

After leaving this frontier post we continued our journey up river, which by this time was beginning to change in character ; the banks becoming high and rocky at intervals and more tortuous, while sand-banks were no longer to be found in the bed of the river, but only in the bends and leading up to the higher bank. Turtles became scarce, but tracajás, capitaris, etc., were abundant. The bush, too, was full of game, of which we always had a good supply, most of it falling to our guns as, making our way slowly up river, we came upon various kinds of muscovy ducks, garcettas (*Ardea*), puma garcas (a small brownish heron), monkeys, and game birds, as they fed along the banks.

One evening while out fishing with the cast net I caught a small green alligator about thirty inches long, and desiring to preserve the skin I gave it to one of my men named Rosalio that he might skin it. I was rather surprised upon his asking me if I required the flesh, and inquired his reason for wishing to know if I could have any use for stuff that ought to be thrown away. He assured me that the flesh was much esteemed as an article of food and wished to cook it for himself. I gave him the required permission on the understanding that no pan which was likely to serve in the preparing of my meals must be used, and thought no more of the alligator meat at the moment. Some few nights later the Indians, having caught several more of this species of alligator, known as jacaré tinga, were having quite a feast.

As they appeared to be enjoying the meal I tried a little, and found the flesh indistinguishable from fresh haddock. I have since then made many very enjoyable meals from its meat. The native women are fond of this flesh and eat it on every possible occasion, as they believe it to be very effective in lessening the pains of childbirth.

After the expiration of some six weeks' travelling the river became much narrower, and at times the banks were so high that we journeyed in their shade the greater part of each day. The banks in places were the home of thousands of kingfishers, the holes containing their nests being in some cases so close together as to cause one to wonder at their number. The current, too, was very strong, and there were now no sand-banks to be seen. Small cataracts began to be encountered, and our progress gradually became more difficult. Eventually we arrived at the mouth of a small creek, and the guide of our party, who had before visited the district, informed me that we should have to enter it. Three days later we arrived at the destination we had agreed upon, a large inland lake known as "Huangana Yacu," or Peccary Lake.

Giving the necessary instructions for the canoes to enter the stream, I again ordered my own canoe men to form the rear of the party, in order that those in front could remove all obstacles to easy navigation, and after three days' paddling, cutting of logs, pulling, swearing, and sweating, we eventually arrived at a log which occupied nearly the whole of the bed of the stream, and was about three feet in diameter. It would have been of no use attempting to cut a trunk of this thickness, and I had begun to think that our canoes would have to remain and the contents be carried overland, but we were enabled to cross it in the following manner: one or two of the men cut down a number of small trees called topa, and with their machetes cut off large portions of the bark, the inside of which was of a mucous nature and very slippery. Pieces were placed upon the trunk which was impeding our passage, and the canoes each in turn hauled upon the pieces of bark, which, owing to its nature, allowed them to slide easily over the big trunk with very little effort.

Shortly after passing this last obstruction, the stream broadened out, and in a few moments we were floating upon the waters of the lake.

The picture was magnificent, the lake covering an area of about four square miles and surrounded on all sides by low, well-wooded hills, which from their height gave promise of plenty of good caucho trees, in which I was not mistaken.

We crossed to the north side of the lake, having entered on the south-east, and on flat ground about twelve feet above the water I ordered the camp to be made, as the ground, though flat, sloped gently in the direction of a small brook behind the site of the camp, and would give us good drainage without polluting the water of the lake.

Our camp that night was a very primitive one, most of us sleeping in the open air without any protection from the dew or rain, as I did not desire any shelters made until the morning, so that no effort would be spared to get the site cleared and substantial shelters and houses constructed, for we should have to remain about nine months.

The following morning we were all up very early, each of the men and some of the women furnished with machetes and axes, and in less than an hour we had a large space of ground opened up and all timber carted away.

Dividing the parties, I then gave instructions for a small two-roomed house with a large veranda to be run up for my own personal use in the centre of the clearing and fronting the lake, while the houses for themselves were to be built equidistant, at the sides of my own, with a space of about forty feet.

I also had small huts constructed on beams built over a part of the previously mentioned stream, to serve as bath- and wash-houses, while at a short distance lower down, others were made for sanitary purposes. That same day, before three o'clock in the afternoon, the camp was complete, and before nightfall the canoes had been discharged and everything in its place, the merchandise stored in my own house, in the room fronting the lake, the other room behind serving as my living quarters, office, etc.

There now remained nothing else to do beyond dispatching the men into the bush to mark their caucho. This is done in the following manner: each man is supplied with arms and ammunition and food calculated to last him about six days, consisting for the most part of a few tins of sardines and eight of farina. Having made a small bundle of other necessities, he penetrates into the bush in search of the caucho trees, which, as he encounters them, are marked with a big letter or other sign cut into the bark of the tree. That particular tree then is his own property, and no other cutter will work upon it unless he is prepared to place his life in jeopardy. The cauchero continues his wandering in the bush, marking well his trail as he goes, until he has blazed the number of trees which he calculates will yield him the amount of rubber that he has set as his limit, after which he returns to the main camp for his axe, a good supply of all that he will require for a month or more, and, returning to the bush, he makes for the first tree and builds himself a small hut.

The caucho (*Castilloa elastica*) is worked in this manner: Clearing a space all around the base of the tree of perhaps twenty feet radius, he proceeds to bleed the long roots and suckers by cutting the bark with his machete, allowing the resultant latex to flow over the ground which has previously been freed of all dead leaves, stick, etc. When this work is concluded the main trunk of the tree is attacked with axe and machete, sometimes requiring in the case of a big specimen several hours' hard work before it eventually falls with a crash to the ground. The bark of the trunk and branches are then subjected to large incisions with the machete, and the latex as it flows is allowed to fall upon the surrounding ground. This performance is repeated until all the trees have been bled, when the making-up of the rubber into balls or rolls is commenced, after allowing a sufficient time for the milk to coagulate and harden. Taking a portion of the hard rubber, weighing perhaps about fifteen pounds, this is roughly washed, and sticks, earth, etc., adhering to it are picked out. Strips of rubber are then cut and are tightly wound around the first-named mass, which subjects the strips to great tension, and this wrapping is continued until there is no more rubber available, the weight of the roll when complete averaging about seventy pounds for a fully grown tree.

The product of a good cauchero will amount to about one thousand kilos of "sernamby de caucho" in rolls, allowing the gatherer about nine months in a district where the tree is abundant, but owing to the lazy and dissolute habits of the average rubber gatherer, he rarely produces much above five hundred kilos. My men, however, worked well with but some six exceptions, who gave me much worry and trouble.

The life of a "patron" (master) cauchero is a very trying one, passed as it is barefooted in the bush, never able to take many days' rest, owing to the absolute necessity of visiting every gatherer at his work as often as possible, and in order to travel quickly he can carry no bed or dry clothes. A good rifle, knife, matches and tobacco are all he carries. For food he depends on a hasty bite in the huts of the men while talking to them, and then off again to visit others, perhaps to rest the night and at other times continue his journey by means of a hurricane lantern. I was never away less than ten days from the principal camp when visiting the workers, nor did I ever remain longer than four days in the camp unless suffering from sickness.

I led this hard life for nearly nine months, during the last two of which I had none of the useful articles of civilization, such as sugar, tea, milk, etc., and my food consisted of the ripe fruit of the mirity palm made into a paste, and as a substitute for tea, coffee, cocoa, etc., a drink made from the berries of the assayi palm.

All this misery was due to the determination of the Cokama whom I had engaged as hunter to work as a cauchero. He had become dissatisfied, owing to the difficulty experienced in the pursuit of game and fish during the later months—due, no doubt, to their retreating from our disturbing influence.

When the men had completed their rolls of caucho, it was necessary for them to help in transporting it from the centre of the bush to the camp, a very trying process owing to the weight and unwieldiness of the bundles, and the necessity of carrying basins, axes, etc., which they had been using.

Some of the men easily carried a weight of sixty to seventy pounds of rubber, suspended upon their backs by a cloth strap passed around their foreheads, and an axe, machetes, and firearm in their hands, while others did not care to carry any but small loads.

In a few days all the rolls were in camp, ready to be floated down the stream to the main river, where we should have to construct our rafts, and no time was lost in this operation.

I had noticed close to the mouth of the small stream several trees of value in the construction of permanent buildings and for the cabinet-making industry. I therefore decided to form a portion of each raft of these woods, calculating to make a good profit by their sale in Iquitos, as they consisted of lauro, aguano, tortuga, quinilla, and a red wood known as cumala, very offensive in odour, but used in the making of cases for packing rubber.

The cutting down and collecting together of all the necessary logs, the tamshi a very strong liana used for securing the logs, and the leaves which it is necessary to lay between the caucho to prevent its melting from the heat of the sun, took us altogether about twenty days, and on 20 February, 1907, the return journey to Nauta was commenced, the party exactly the same in number as when we entered the bush, but rather weakened from the effects of a long time spent in the forest.

We travelled day and night and occupied five large rafts, upon each of which was constructed a hut occupying more than half the raft, where those who were not occupied in steering the raft round obstacles were well sheltered from the sun, and had fair room to sleep at night.

Resting one day on the floor of the hut constructed upon the raft on which I was travelling, my attention was drawn to the rustling in the green thatch of what I supposed was a small lizard, and throwing some missile in its direction I was horrified for a moment to see that I had disturbed a large green snake, called by the Peruvians loro machaco (parrot snake). Regaining presence of mind, I called one of my boys and informed him of the presence of the snake, which he soon killed. It was of a pretty parrot-green colour and though not very thick it measured about five feet in length.

Our progress down river was very slow, perhaps some four miles per hour, but we travelled the whole of the twenty-four hours each day, and without any incident worthy of note during the voyage we arrived at Nauta twenty-one days and a half after commencing the voyage from the mouth of the stream in the upper reaches of the River Tigre, right in the heart of the forests of Ecuador.

Upon arriving at Nauta with the rafts well laden with rubber and all the men who had left with me in good health and spirits I felt very happy indeed, but shortly after securing each raft and going through the town, I received news that caused me great consternation.

First I learned that the man whom I had left in charge of my store had run away, taking with him all the cash and merchandise, even stripping all the fittings. Then I learned that rubber was very low indeed in price, and that I could hope to make but little profit.

A launch arriving shortly after confirmed this, and I decided to realize my rubber immediately, but in this I was also disappointed, as the captain of the launch offered to buy only in exchange for merchandise.

Deciding to carry it on to Iquitos, I got most of my men together and continued the journey on the rafts, arriving next day, when I found the crisis was so acute that it was very hard to get anyone to buy for cash, so I had to make an arrangement to send the whole to Europe through a commission house, who made me a small allowance in cash on account, which did not even suffice to pay the salaries earned by my men, much less permit of my cancelling my own very pressing liabilities. However, there was nothing else to be done, and I returned with my men to Nauta.

This shortage of ready cash and the flight of my employee left me in a very critical position and gave rise to much discontent among several of my men, who eventually decided to run away, as I had to refuse any more advances until they had reduced their indebtedness to me. They carried their resolution into effect in the early hours of a subsequent morning, and five of them embarked in one of my best boats (worth about £70 sterling) and started down river. I was advised of this, and decided to pursue them, as their indebtedness to me aggregated more than £200 and I could not afford to lose my canoe. Arriving at Iquitos, I made inquiries and found that they had passed, saying they were going to the River Curassow, one of the tributaries of the River Javary, on the Brazilian side.

I then realized that they were probably making for a place where I had seven men working caucho for me, in partnership with a Peruvian who had a similar number, a supposition which was confirmed at a place lower down river where the men had stopped, so I then decided to continue the voyage and at the same time receive the caucho from my partner, which would help me out of my difficulties by enabling me to sell it in exchange for the merchandise which was most needed.

Upon my arrival at Nazareth in the River Javary I learned that the runaways had sold the canoe and with the cash derived from their deal had taken passage in a launch bound to the Curassow; so, after providing food, etc., for the men who had accompanied me in the pursuit, and obtaining the loan of necessary arms and ammunition, I continued to follow them.

From Nazareth to the mouth of the Curassow occupied us eight days or so, and from there to a small place called San Bento nearly twelve days more. Here I had to replenish our stores and leave my men, except one, with the large canoe.

Borrowing a very small canoe, and taking with me only one man, I ascended a small stream called "Morto Pescador" (dead fisherman) for nearly eight days before arriving at the base camp of the caucheros, which I found deserted.

Fastening the canoe securely, we carried everything up to the camp and rested a whole day.

The following morning I resolved to send my man in one direction while I went in another, instructing him to return if he found any of the workers, without advising them of my arrival.

Penetrating the bush and following the course of the stream, about midday I came across a fresh "trocha" or trail, in which I noticed fresh footmarks, and continued it all day, but was obliged to pass the night in the open, my bed consisting of several long green leaves, not unlike those of the banana tree, but, notwithstanding, passed a very good night, though wet through with the heavy dew and perspiration caused while walking during the heat of the day. Rising about sunrise the subsequent morning, I continued my march, and about nine o'clock was rewarded by hearing the measured beat of an axe; quickening my steps, I came upon one of my own caucheros, working upon a fine caucho tree. He did not seem very pleased at seeing me, and I asked him to guide me to the camp where I could find the Peruvian, who was working under an agreement between us whereby we were to equally divide the produce of the labours of his seven men and my own. Upon my insisting, as I was obliged to do in order to prevent his giving warning of my arrival, which I could distinctly see was anything but agreeable, he reluctantly agreed to guide me to the camp. We arrived late in the afternoon, and the reception accorded me by my partner caused me to see clearly that something was wrong. His own men were not present in the camp, but all my seven and the five runaways were there.

To my inquiries respecting the amount of caucho worked and ready for shipment his replies were evasive, so I called up the men and questioned them, when, to my surprise, I learned that they had made an agreement whereby they recognized only the Peruvian as their master and creditor, and that, in so far as their indebtedness to me was concerned, I must look to my partner for payment, as they would deliver their caucho to him to cover his disbursements on their account.

The total amount of their indebtedness to me was about nine hundred pounds, in payment of which I took a bill of exchange drawn by their new master (my late partner) against one of the Iquitos houses. This draft when presented by me on my return to Iquitos was protested, so my voyage and the expenses incurred therewith had been in vain, added to which the loss caused by the non-delivery of the caucho I had expected to receive brought my total losses to over £1000.

Becoming thoroughly disgusted, I realized all my effects in Nauta in order to pay out the men who had returned from the River Tigre with credit balances. This done, I told all those who remained in debt that they could look for a new patron to guarantee for them, and that same evening they all had arranged with a very decent young Peruvian named Rengifo to accompany him to work caucho in the higher reaches of the Purus. He came the following day to arrange with me the payment of the debt, and, having checked the statements, he made me the offer of an immediate liquidation in cash if I would agree to allow him a discount of 20 per cent on the total of each account, to which I agreed. The money produced by this arrangement gave me sufficient to pay my own debts and left me sufficient with which to start life again. I then decided to leave the district and try in Manaos.

CHAPTER IX

A VOYAGE BY RAFT DOWN THE AMAZON

In charge of a raft—The passengers and cargo—Inconveniences—Flying pests—The mouth of the Napo—Voyage of Orellana—Arrival at Oran and Pevas—The frontiers—Panama hats—San Pablo de Olivença—Description—The Putumayo—Santo Antonio—An awkward delay—The Japura—Arrival at Teffe—Caught in a storm—In extreme danger—The rafts separated—An accident—Piranha bites—Salvation—Experiences compared—A fatal ending—Arrival at River Purus—Arrival at Manaos—Successful ending—In charge of seringal—Manner of working—A hard life—Sickness again—I abandon Tupenduba—Up the River Jandiatuba—Across country to the Jurua—Up the Jurua as a free lance—Across country to the Purus and down to Manaos.

NOT having sufficient money available to defray all the expenses of a passage to Manaos by steamer, it occurred to me that as Rengifo was taking more than eighty caucheros to the Purus, he would most probably travel by raft, and, this turning out to be the case, I asked him to allow me to travel with his party to the mouth of the Purus, where I should only be a few hours from Manaos.

He readily agreed to this on consideration of my taking charge of a raft, which I was only too glad to do, and on 3 May, 1907, we departed from Iquitos on two large rafts lashed together to keep them from becoming separated in the course of the voyage.

The number of persons on the two rafts would be about one hundred and twenty, consisting of men, women, and children. There were also a great number of baskets and crates, in which were the poultry belonging to the caucheros, and great quantities of baggage and domestic utensils, including a dozen sewing machines.

There were several dogs on board destined for hunting purposes in the bush.

These people were in fact carrying all they possessed, as it was understood they were going for a period of at least four years, and probably most of them would never return. The weight of baggage they carried caused each raft to become overloaded to the extent of its being quite six inches under water during the length of the voyage, compelling everyone to be barefooted day and night.

This in itself was a great inconvenience, for when the feet remain for lengthened periods under water they become very painful and tender; while they are subjected to the attacks of the sand-flies and mosquitoes, but, worst of all, to a terribly annoying blood-sucking fly called "motuca," whose persistency is incredible, driving one almost crazy with ineffectual attempts to kill him, as he is very quick on the wing.

The experiences one meets with in the course of a journey by raft from Iquitos to the Purus are, as a rule, very varied.

Some ten hours after leaving Iquitos we came to the mouth of the Napo, beyond which the river takes the name of Marañon. It is stated by some writers that it was so named by the great Spanish explorer Orellana, who made the first trip down this river in 1540 in search of the sea. When the expedition arrived at the mouth of the Napo, where it flows into the Amazon, the sailors thought they had reached the sea, and cried out, questioning whether they had arrived at the "Mar o' naõ," meaning in English

"The sea or not." The river about here is very wide, and the view up or down river is not impeded by islands or winding of its course.

After a short delay for the purchase of bananas, etc., we left the mouth of the Napo, and were soon passing Oran and Pevas, mentioned earlier in the book, and on the third day we passed the old Peruvian village of Loreto, founded by the missionaries about the middle of the sixteenth century.

On the fourth night we had to stop at Leticia and Tabatinga, the Peruvian and Brazilian frontier posts respectively, in order that our rafts and baggage could be overhauled in search of "panama" hats, tobacco, and other contraband goods.

In speaking of panama hats, I use the name by which they are generally known in Europe, although not a product of Panama; in Brazil they are known as "Chilian hats," in Peru as "Rioja hats," and in Ecuador as "Jipi Japa hats." In Brazil they are misnamed, while in Peru and Ecuador the local descriptions are correct, as Rioja in Peru, and Jipi Japa in Ecuador, are villages which are the centres of the hat-making industry.

The grass or palm shoots used in the making of panama hats are the same in Peru, Ecuador, and Colombia, but owing to different methods employed in weaving them the hats of each of the above countries are easily distinguished.

The best qualities of hats come from Ecuador and Peru, great patience being shown in the fineness of their structure, while those from Colombia are rather coarse and hard.

The hats are woven from the green inner leaves of a small species of palm with fan-shaped leaves, which are separated into very thin strips with the aid of the thumb nail, and allowed to dry in the shade, in which state they are used; and not soaked, as is stated by some writers, nor are they woven under water.

Leaving Tabatinga and the mouth of the Javary far behind, we passed the small Brazilian town of San Pablo de Olivença, founded at the beginning of the seventeenth century.

This town or village is built on very high ground, and has a few well-built houses, but the majority of the buildings are in a very dilapidated condition, probably due to the village having little commercial value, its chief business being done with the Tucuna Indians who inhabit the district.

About three days further down we passed the mouth of the now famous Putumayo, or Içа (pronounced heesah) as it is known to the Brazilians. At the mouth of the river, situated on rising ground and banks of reddish clay, is a small village named Santo Antonio, populated by a few people occupied in the exploitation of rubber and the drying of piraracu and manati (*Peixe boi*).

Some forty hours after leaving the mouth of the Iça we passed the mouth of the Ituhy, and late at night of the same day passed the mouth of the Jurua, which enters the Amazon on its south bank.

A little lower down the force of the wind drove the rafts into a "parana" or arm on the north bank of the river, which caused us great delay, as we had to continue navigating it, and owing to the weakness of its current barely carried the rafts along its surface. We eventually got into part of the River Japura and arrived once more on the Amazon proper close to the town of Teffe, founded about 1630 by the Jesuits.

Passing the Rivers Catuá and Coary, we arrived at a part of the river where the Amazon broadens greatly in the neighbourhood of the small village of Cadajas.

Here the river is full of large islands, which make it difficult to calculate the exact width. These parts are greatly feared, owing to the prevalence of sudden rain and wind storms which make them dangerous to small craft.

Our own party had here a very trying experience during one of these sudden squalls, which commenced about one o'clock in the morning of the eighteenth day of our journey.

The night, which up to this hour had been perfectly clear owing to the full moon set in a cloudless sky, suddenly became as dark as pitch, and a strong wind commenced which began to raise large waves upon the water. In a very few moments we were in the heart of one of the worst storms of wind and rain that I have known in all my experience on the rivers. The rain swept through our rough shelters constructed on the rafts, and the wind carried away part of the thatched roofings, besides carrying the rafts in all directions.

In the midst of all this turmoil the waves began to break them up, and in less time than it takes to tell we were in a very critical condition; the women, children, and most of the men absolutely panic-stricken and calling upon the Saints to help them.

I recognized that something must be done to prevent the timbers of the rafts from "spreading," so by plenty of well-directed persuasion with a stick I got four or five men out of the shelters, and by dint of hard words, upbraiding them for their cowardice, they made efforts to secure the poles where the strands of fibre had given way; but no sooner was the raft secure in one part than it would begin to "spread" in another.

We were greatly handicapped by the want of fresh lashings and because of the strong lianas which joined the two rafts parting at one end and allowing them to separate, thereby increasing our danger, owing to the pull of the rafts against each other, which, so long as they were securely joined, was insignificant, as their movement caused by the waves was in unison; but when they became separated their movement was independent and the strain tremendous.

In view of this fact there was nothing else to do but cut the remaining lashings and allow the two rafts to entirely separate. Putting two of the men on one raft, without telling them my object, I remained with two on the other, and set them to secure broken parts, but as soon as they got to work I cut the cords and allowed each raft to take care of itself. This gave me more opportunity to attend to that on which I was embarked, but even so, it was my ill-luck to slip between two of the logs as they were being secured, and had to remain with my legs from the knees down more than two hours in the water, a victim to the attacks of piranha and other carnivorous fishes, that bit my legs in such a terrible manner that I bear the marks to-day to the number of some hundreds. The continual friction of the logs also lacerated the flesh above my knees almost to the bone, causing wounds from which I suffered many months.

With the arrival of day our situation was greatly improved, and it became possible to release the logs by which I was trapped sufficiently to allow my freeing myself, then I quickly bound them with rags soaked in a solution of bichloride of mercury, and set to work to render all assistance in keeping the raft together.

About 7 a.m. we got into a part of the river where the waves were not so heavy, and took this opportunity of using the sweeps to get close in to the bank. We were lucky to come to a stop amidst a lot of reeds, near to a sand-bank, and pushing our way through them we were soon tied up and in safety. A few moments after the other raft hove in sight, and at the cost of great effort made fast upon the sand-bank some twenty yards below us.

On comparing experiences, I learned that a few moments after we separated this raft had passed over a sand-bank just covered with water, upon which an uprooted tree had become stranded, and with which they had barely escaped colliding, though one of the branches had struck a woman and knocked her overboard, presumably killing her, as she did not cry out and was never seen again.

This did not seem to affect anyone very much, they were all apparently too thankful to have escaped themselves, and were too occupied in repairing the rafts. Luckily there was a plentiful supply of appropriate timber and lianas, and after a few hours' work we were under way again, and arrived two days later at the mouth of the River Purus, the end of the journey by raft. From here I took a steamer to Manaos, arriving on the morning of 26 May, 1907, and on the same day made arrangements to take charge of a seringal, close to the River Javary, leaving the following day on the *Esperança*, of the Amazon River Steam Navigation Company's Iquitos Line. This is a fine boat, spacious and speedy, and has excellent cabin accommodation; the food on board was good, but of a character peculiarly Brazilian, particularly Amazonas, consisting mostly of farina, turtles, fish, and dried beef and beans, a trying diet for new arrivals from Europe, but to which a long stay in the country causes one to get accustomed.

After a pleasant and uneventful trip of seven days, I arrived at my destination, and made my first acquaintance with a Brazilian seringal and trading station. I was well received, and some of the best coffee I have ever tasted was served to me.

I had arrived early in the day, and coffee was served at short intervals until the hour for the evening meal, to which I did justice. My hammock having been slung on the veranda, I was soon asleep, undisturbed by the myriads of mosquitoes, noisy dogs, or flying bats and vampires.

The following morning I was awakened before daylight by a small boy who had brought me a large glass of warm milk, followed almost immediately after by a small cup of black coffee, and about seven I sat down to a good meal of toasted biscuits, bread, hot milk, and more coffee.

After the meal I strolled round the house and out-buildings and found them to be well constructed of brick and tile. There was also a small chapel for the use of the family, employees, and labourers.

Having asked for details respecting the seringal which I was to manage, the proprietor informed me that it was about ten hours lower down river, and that he was expecting two young men who were to go down with me, in order to help open it up, as the place had not been worked for ten years, and was hidden from view by rank grass and seticos (*Cecropia peltata*).

This was something rather different from what I had been led to expect, but I was not in a position to raise any protest, and the day following, the young men having arrived, we embarked in a canoe, taking all my food and luggage for several days. I was soon at the site of my new labours, which I found to be even worse than I had imagined, aggravated by the fact that the young men would not remain.

A path had to be cut through the long grass to the house, which I found to be a straggling board structure. The floors had rotted, making walking upon them precarious. Evidence was not wanting, however, that the place could be made very pretty and comfortable when cleaned and repaired, and all superfluous growth cut down and burned, so I decided to stay and see what could be done with it.

After five months' hard work, during which I got the grounds into good condition, the seringal and rubber cutters to work under my own supervision, my health broke down and I was forced to retire.

I had been living alone all this time, doing all my own cooking and other domestic duties, and obliged to traverse the forest paths nearly every day, in order to keep the rubber cutters at work, and see their daily production, so as to prevent their selling to travelling traders or "regatons." I had been obliged to attend to the store almost every night, because of the visits of Tucuna Indians with rubber, which they sold in exchange for spirits and ammunition. On Saturdays I had to make the journey in a canoe with whatever rubber I had bought at my branch to the principal house, which meant twelve to fourteen hours' hard paddling up stream. I used to start about eleven at night on the Friday and return at two o'clock on Sunday morning, in order to issue the weekly dole of foodstuffs, etc., to the rubber gatherers.

My sickness began in a peculiar way, commencing with loss of appetite, feverishness, and debility. No doctor was available, but an old Tucuna woman offered to cure me; and though I was doubtful of her ability to do so, I allowed her to have her way. She forbade my eating anything at all until her arrival next day, when she gave me coffee sweetened with crushed sugar cane, followed by a dose of the milk of a tree known as the caixinguba.

The effect of this was to cause profuse perspiration, during which I fell into a deep sleep, from which I was aroused by the purging influence of the medicine. The result was that I expelled a large worm, similar to our English earth worm. This no doubt had entered my system at an early stage while drinking water from the pools in the bush. My health improving greatly, the " wanderlust " seized me once more, and I packed my baggage and prepared to leave the place.

Giving up my occupation, I left Tupenduba in my canoe, and as I had been offered a position in the River Jandiatuba, I entered its mouth on the second day, and ascending nearly five days arrived at the establishment where I expected to find employment, but being unsuccessful in this, joined a party of rubber gatherers who were going by paths known to them which terminated at a seringal near a place called " Carauary " on the River Jurua. They offered to help me in the transportation of my load; so selling my canoe I took my departure with the Brazilians.

Arriving at our destination on the second day, I remained with them until the following morning, and buying another small canoe I continued my journey up the Jurua, stopping at every house in search of employment, and although not successful in this, I was well treated everywhere, never being allowed to continue my journey without accepting sufficient food to cover my arrival at the next establishment.

Notwithstanding the fact that I was unlucky in not finding any continuous employment, I resumed my journey up river with occasional stops of a day or two to help some small proprietor in making up his accounts with his workmen, and in this way when I arrived at the mouth of the River Mú I had as a result of three months' hard work and pleasure over £60 cash in good Brazilian notes.

I here joined a party of Peruvian caucheros, who at this period were very numerous in these altitudes, and little by little made my way, passing from group to group, and travelling only by their trochas (forest paths). At times alone and at others accompanied, I crossed country, encountering on my way the rivers Tarauacá, Embira, Purus, and Acre, eventually arriving at one of the establishments of a well-known Peruvian named Davila. After a short stay, I descended in a canoe to the mouth of the Acre, where I caught the Brazilian steamer and was soon in Manaos.

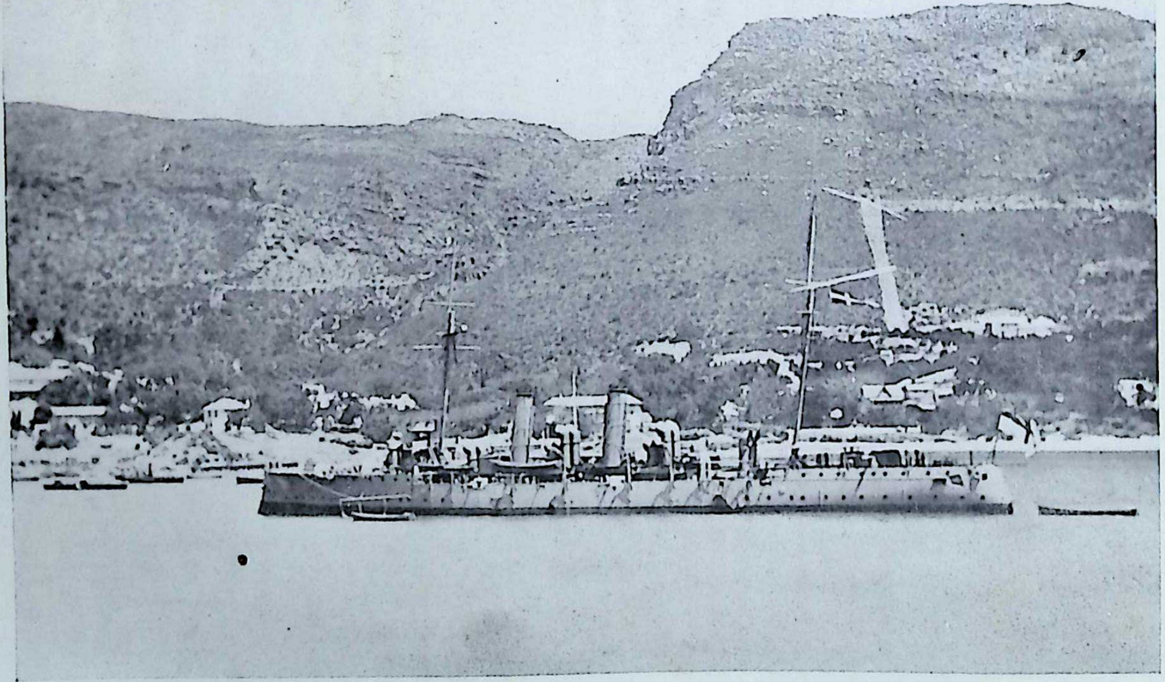
The journey from the mouth of the Jandiatuba up the Jurua and back to Manaos occupied just over four months of my time, which I do not consider wasted, as I acquired a good deal of jungle knowledge, which is so necessary for a man who decides to travel in the South American interior.

CHAPTER X

THE PUTUMAYO

A short rest—H.M.S. *Pelorus*—Yellow fever—The colony at Riojana—An enforced delay—An Amazonian trading station—Cultivation—The Moquin—Indian peons—Ill-treatment and flight—Their foresight—Pursuit—Failure—Arrival of an Englishman—Motives of his arrival—The "tarrafa," or cast-net—How made and used—A narrow escape from drowning—Walks through the forest—Fauna encountered—Arrival of launch—Departure for the Putumayo—Tacna, the Peruvian military post—Description—Officers and Indian women—The Igara-Parana—Arrival at El Encanto—Indian labourers—An honourable man—A comparison—Conditions under which steamers are loaded and unloaded—The principal establishment—Its construction—Internal administration—Unfortunate Indian women prisoners.

UPON my arrival in Manaos I thought it was about time I had a change, and decided to spend several days in complete idleness and quiet enjoyment, visiting the outlying places of the town, sitting in public gardens, reading or listening to the playing of the bands, or merely resting outside some café with a cold drink, observing the passing crowd. After several days of this kind of thing the inaction worried me, and as I was thinking one evening whilst seated at a table outside a café, I was approached by a member of a well-known English firm with offices in London, who made me an offer which I agreed to accept. I was employed in their Manaos office, remaining until February, 1908, when I was offered a superior position with the company at their El Encanto branch, on the River



H.M.S. *PELOROUS.* FIRST BRITISH MAN-OF-WAR TO REACH IQUITOS

Putumayo. After arrangements had been completed and everything done to my absolute satisfaction, I was sorry to have to take my leave; for while in Manaos, under the control of the managing director, I had been remarkably well treated, particularly during the visit of H.M.S. *Pelorus*, and during an attack of yellow fever immediately after.

Leaving Manaos on 23 February by the river boat of the same name, I arrived at one of the dependencies of the company on the twenty-ninth day of the same month.

The name of the settlement is "Colonia Riojana"; it is a point of call for the steamers run by the Peruvian Amazon Co., Ltd., between their concessions on the Putumayo and Iquitos. I had been informed in Manaos that I should have to wait about two days in order to continue my journey to El Encanto.

Imagine my disgust when I found upon disembarking that the boat from Iquitos to the Putumayo had left some ten hours prior to my arrival. However, there was nothing else to do but to wait for the next, a matter of some three months or so, and accordingly I settled down to make the best of my enforced holiday. I found that the house was a well-built one, the man in charge and his compañera were very attentive and hospitable. There were a few fruit trees round about, a well-kept little flower garden, and, at a distance, a large plantation.

Shortly after arriving I had seen round the house for several miles quite a number of Indian labourers. On my expressing a desire to walk around the buildings, the agent in charge took me on a tour of inspection.

The house itself was very well made, and furnished better than any I had seen outside the villages and towns, and it contained a good upright piano. Fowls, pigs, and cattle were plentiful, and there was always an abundant supply of fresh milk and eggs, while a small square pond contained a number of fine river turtles.

The "chacara" or plantation was well cultivated and contained mandioc, maize, beans, igname (cora, a large tuber), and bananas in abundance. This farm served as a supply base for the furnishing of the above articles of food for the launches which communicate with El Encanto and La Chorrera, the principal branches of the Peruvian Amazon Co., Ltd., in the Putumayo region. At one time a suggestion was made with regard to building a convalescent home here, in order that employees of the firm could come to recuperate, for, apart from the advantages above enumerated, the climate is very healthy.

There is a terrible plague of a certain small insect called by the Brazilians "moquin," which makes its home in the grass, and when one is obliged to walk even twenty yards through it, these insects are picked up by the clothing and swarm all over the body, boring their way under the skin, and causing an exceptionally unpleasant irritation, which, if precautions are not taken to disinfect with pure alcohol or other powerful antiseptic, results in small boils or similar skin troubles, owing to the decomposition of these pests under the skin. They are in colour like coral, and it requires good eyesight to see them. They are prevalent in the bush, attacking animals and birds indiscriminately, but in the pastures where cattle graze they are more abundant, it being a common thing to see domestic cattle with reddish coloured patches composed of millions of these insects.

The labourers employed on this farm were mainly Indians from the neighbourhood of Iquitos, as they were Cokamas and Cokamillos, but there were also two Huitoto Indian women. I had seen the whip used on several occasions on these unfortunates, who were treated with very little consideration. They were always placed under lock and key, in rooms beneath the house, after six o'clock in the evening. They had made several attempts to run away, owing to their treatment at the hands of the manager, who, when under the influence of drink, was one of the most intolerant and inhuman men I have known.

The last occasion on which I saw the whip used was upon the girl who attended to the domestic duties, and she, for some slight misdemeanour, was cruelly flogged. This must have irritated the Indians to the utmost degree, for, although they were locked up as usual that evening, the next morning they had all disappeared. Having gathered together what little property they possessed, they had cut their way from the rooms and made for the river. There they found the canoes, and, after cutting the strong chains which secured them, they took possession of two of the best, and let the others drift down the river. They did, however, leave one small canoe, sufficient for two persons, knowing that two men dare not attempt to follow them. I may say that not one of them was ever caught again, and, as they numbered more than forty, they ought to have been able to do well in their new condition. At least, it has always been my hope that they would.

The agent (R . . . o I . . . s) did go up river on the first available steamer, but this was four days after the event, consequently, although he got information from several points that the canoes had been seen to pass, he returned at the expiration of about twenty days to report his failure.

In his absence I was called to the port by the repeated blasts from the siren of a small launch, which had made fast to the bank. Upon going aboard it was a surprise to me to find myself addressed in English, and found that I was in the company of an English army officer who had been among the Indians of an adjacent river. This gentleman was in pursuit of a canoe which had stolen two young Indians from his care, it being his desire to carry them to England.

I afterwards learned that he was fortunate enough to find them and take them out of the hands of the slave dealers, one of whom, it eventually transpired, was brother to the man in charge of Colonia Riojana.

This army officer, while we were conversing over a whisky-and-soda, told me some very curious experiences he had had while searching for his Indian children, and the fear with which he had come to be regarded, all of which was quite true.

It is a great pity that more men of his stamp do not visit the country, for its territory is rich in good sport for the gun and rod. There are quite sufficient danger and excitement to be found in the rivers to suit any energetic Englishman who places little value on his clothing or his skin, and who is a sportsman born and bred. There is little doubt in my mind that ten really good men could get together in twelve months more specimens of the Amazon flora and fauna, coupled with more information respecting the country, than has been gathered in the last hundred years. Men who have lived the life of the rivers know that little danger of a climatic nature really exists. Much that has been written of the country has been given to the public by travellers who, in most cases, know only a small district, and, in others, have relied on " information " given to them under the promptings of somebody's whisky. This probably accounts for most of the ridiculous stories of Indians and others that one sees in print.

While in Colonia Riojana, waiting for the steamer to carry me away, and subsequent to the flight of the Indians, I got the son of one of the overseers employed on the farm to teach me to throw the cast-net, which is used all over the Amazon Valley, and is called tarrafa, a description of which may interest the reader.

The net is made of thin twine or strong thread, and is woven so as to form diamond-shaped meshes. Starting from a centre the weaving is continued until a large circular mat is formed which has a diameter of from twelve to sixteen feet. The outside edge is then secured to a thin rope, to which, at about every two inches, leads are attached, of some two ounces weight, forming a total of about three to four kilos. This outside weighted ring is then turned under about eighteen inches, and fastened with twine in such a way that an inner bag or pouch is formed. A strong line of about thirty feet in length is then attached to the centre, and the net is quite ready for use. The fisherman, when employing this, secures the loose end of the line to his left wrist, coiling the remainder loosely until he arrives at the centre of the net, where it is firmly grasped in the left hand and raised to the height of the shoulder. This gives the net when it is suspended a bell-shaped appearance. Placing a portion of the weighted mouth between his teeth, several folds of the net are thrown loosely over the left arm, and then, raising his right arm, he throws the net from left to right, imparting a twist not unlike that given to a quoit when thrown. The net, when properly thrown, opens in the air like a parachute, and falls upon the surface of the water as it attains its extreme spread, when the weights cause it to sink, and the mouth to rapidly close, owing to the weights, thereby securing any fish that have had the misfortune to be trapped.

This class of net is mostly used when fish are present in shoals, such as when the river begins to fall and the fish come from the flat flooded grounds and inland lakes, or when it has fallen sufficiently to expose the sand-banks. In the latter case the net is thrown in exactly the manner described into very shallow water, when the net does not close, but covers a large radius of sand under the water. It is then slowly dragged on to the bank, imprisoning in this manner all fish contained within its circumference.

After I had become fairly proficient in the use of the cast-net, I went out in a canoe, accompanied by the small boy previously mentioned, who served me as guide and as steersman for the canoe. Dropping slowly down the river, we came to a spot where there were a strong current and high banks, which, according to the boy, was a good spot to cast the net. Standing in the prow of the small and unsteady canoe, I cast my net well into a small backwash, and felt that I had secured some big fish, which, in its struggles to free itself, pulled on the line strong enough to cause me to lose my balance, and over I went, causing the canoe to spin around, throwing the boy into the water in a contrary direction. As I fell into the water, the fish, feeling less resistance on the line, made another effort to get free, which, coupled with the weight of the net, was dragging me deep down into the water, and nullifying all my efforts to remain afloat with my free right arm. I soon recognized that I was in a position of extreme danger, as the tightness of the cord round my left wrist soon testified, and, try as I would, I could not easily loosen it, owing to its having become swollen in the water. Realizing that I must soon drown unless I could relieve myself of the net, I allowed myself to sink. After taking a deep breath, and with my right hand now free, I tried to get the loop loosened from around my wrist, but without any success, until the net, touching the bottom, caused the strain on the cord to slacken, and, with the help of teeth and fingers, I was free, but none too soon, for a few seconds more might have been too late. As it was, when I did reach the surface, my lungs felt as though they would burst, the first pure air being drawn into them causing me agonizing pain. Luckily I found a large log to which I could cling, and was soon upon it. I could neither see nor hear anything of the canoe, and remained sitting on the log several hours, when I was taken off by a canoe going up river. The man in charge informed me that the canoe from which I had fallen had been secured some five miles down river. Nothing, however, was seen of the boy, and he was never heard of again. He must have struck his head in falling, or had fallen a victim to some river monster. This unfortunate incident depressed me greatly, and increased my anxiety for the arrival of the steamer.

Fishing being out of the question, it became my habit to take long walks by the many paths which traversed the forest, taking with me a short gun. On one of these walks I shot a fine specimen of the roseate spoonbill, but could not preserve the feathers, as I could get nothing which would suit the purpose. Later I saw many other specimens, but would not attempt to shoot them, the meat being little used as food. These birds and also another small species of speckled heron, called locally "puma garça," were quite abundant, owing no doubt to the existence of some inland lake at no great distance.

Felines were also quite common, and on one occasion during a walk of less than two hours I saw a female and two cubs of the spotted variety, or jaguar (*Felis onca*), a fine puma (*Felis concolor*), and a small black one. This latter species is greatly disliked by the natives, owing to its treachery and fearlessness.

After a stay of two months at Colonia Riojana, on 12 May, 1908, the steamer *Liberal* arrived, and the captain having had instructions to carry me to that sadly misnamed spot "El Encanto," meaning "The Enchantment," my journey commenced that same day to the regions which by now are familiar in name to the civilized world. The Putumayo, or, as it has been termed, "The Devil's Paradise," owing to the shocking atrocities committed upon the Indians by Peruvian and sometimes other taskmasters and slave drivers, under a refined scheme of "civilization," reminiscent of the Pharaohs, was to be the scene of my future labours.

After a journey of several days, made almost unbearable during the day by sand-flies, we arrived at our first stop, the Brazilian and Peruvian frontier posts of Tarapaca, at both of which places the garrisons wore face nets and gloves in order to protect themselves from the insect pests, many thousands taking up their abode with us. Owing to my possessing neither face net nor gloves, I was made thoroughly miserable until we got out of the sand-fly zone.

Our next stop was at Tacna, a Peruvian military post, occupied by about thirty men and officers under the command of a captain, with a battery of modern field artillery and a maxim section.

The post was new and well organized, having been transferred from Arica, an old military post at the mouth of the River Igara-Parana, which is now abandoned. I was much impressed with the presence of Indian women, and some months later found that it was the custom for officers, when assigned to the local military posts on garrison or special duties, to be furnished with these women by the agents of the company at El Encanto and La Chorrera, and, on occasions, even by inferior employees.

These women remained with their masters, during their term of service, as concubines purely and simply, as all domestic and other duties which officers require are performed by soldiers. It was a common occurrence for an officer to neglect his duties in order to visit El Encanto or La Chorrera to exchange his woman on some frivolous pretext, and his desires were always met, perhaps to the extent of taking some child barely in her teens, and in a semi-savage state, straight from her parents into the hands of a man thoroughly brutalized by vice, and who, after ruining the girl both morally and physically, returns her to the agents of the company. Should one of these girls have the good fortune to fall into the hands of an officer or employee who had regard for her and desired to take her away with him, she could not go, as this was not permitted by the agents of the company.

Passing the mouth of the Igara-Parana, we continued our journey on to El Encanto, arriving there about forty hours afterwards. Our arrival was the signal for much blowing of the steamer's siren and the discharging of cannon, rockets, and coloured lights.

After the steamer had been secured to the bank and a plank put out to serve as gangway, she was boarded by a host of employees of all descriptions, preceded by a short, slim young Peruvian, evidently with a goodly amount of Indian and Negro blood in his veins, who was in charge of the station.

I presented my credentials, but was completely ignored by this most ignorant but all-important personage, and remained on board the steamer for five days before being assigned to my rooms.

On several occasions I visited a young American doctor, who was the medical officer, and who had made up his mind to leave by the steamer, for purely personal reasons.

He insisted on taking with him an Indian woman, who was about to become a mother, and she remains with him to this day, the mother of his child, loved and respected, and leaves little trace of her Indian origin, owing to the care and patience which this man has devoted to her education, for which he deserves the greatest of praise. This case, with the exception of Robuchon, the explorer, who, according to rumour, was lost on one of his expeditions and eaten by Indians, is the only one I know of where an Indian girl has been allowed to leave the district to her advantage, but instances of a contrary character are numerous. One particularly bad case came under my notice.

An employee, holding a high position with the company, had as a concubine a young woman of the Rizigoro tribe, by whom he had two children. Having taken a strong liking for a young and pretty girl, he abandoned the young Indian mother, after taking the children away and sending them to his parents. Shortly after this occurrence his young brother came to the district as an employee of the company, and took as concubine the mother of his brother's children, Though denials of this maltreatment of Indians are common. this case, and many others of a similar character, though given the fullest publicity, remain uncontradicted.

While on board the steamer I had plenty of opportunity for observing the unloading of the cargo and the loading of rubber, which was performed wholly by Indians, men, women, and children working under about twenty overseers, mostly low types of Peruvians and Colombians, carrying whips and in some cases sticks, which they used to spur the Indians to efforts almost impossible for very strong men, much less for ill-fed and poorly developed Indians, who were obliged to carry heavy cases of goods or barrels of spirits up a bank which maintained a slope of nearly fifty degrees for a distance of some three hundred yards. There is little cause for wonder about the lost individuality of the Indians when we find them, under perpetual persecution, submitting to such slavish conditions, and terrorized by fear of punishment at the hands of the slave-driving overseers.

Their food during the loading and unloading of the steamer, on this and subsequent occasions, consisted of about a gill of tea or coffee, at 5.30 a.m.; sardines, salmon, or canned beef, mixed with boiled rice and water and a little dry farina, at 11.30 a.m. and 6 p.m.; and, if the agent was in one of his very rare good humours, they were given a drop or two of common sugar spirit (cachasa), a rough and fiery kind of white rum, prepared locally.

The house at El Encanto was a very well-built one, about ten years having been spent in its construction, at a cost which would purchase a really good property in England, the increased cost being due to the amount of labour occupied in the preparing of the timber for the principal beams and skeleton of the building. It is built on piles at a height of from ten to twelve feet above the ground, the basement being closed in with clay walls and used as a warehouse for rubber and merchandise.

The upper portion is used as a store, offices, and habitations for the principal administrative employees, who, as a rule, numbered about five, each one having his own apartments which were strictly private.

The store was a large room some sixty feet by forty and the show cases, shelves, and other requisites would have done credit to many a high-class shop in Europe, because of the rare woods employed and exquisite carving.

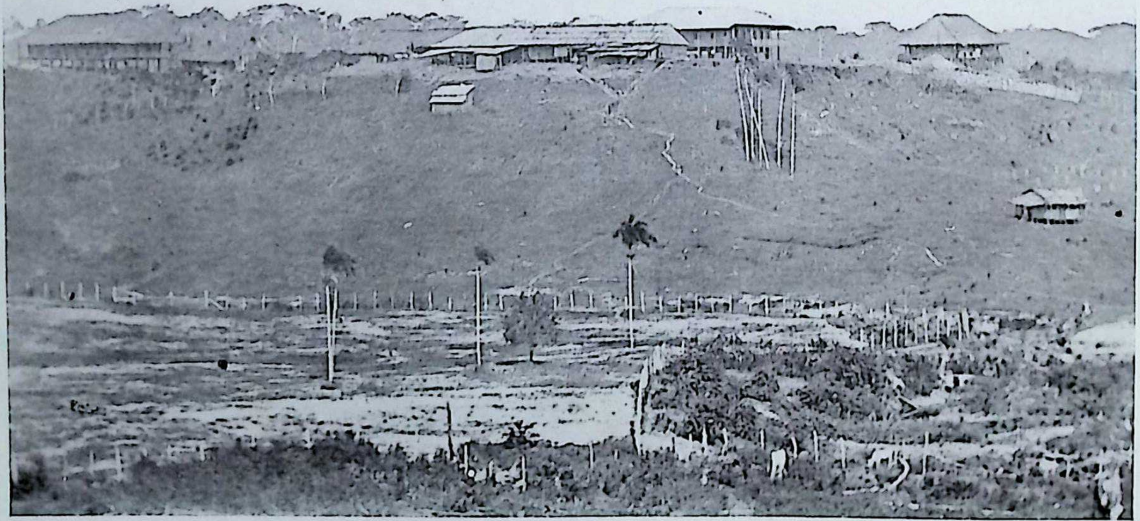
The employees' rooms were well made, with well-worked walls of cedar (*Cedrela odorata*) and other rich woods. The whole building would occupy a square with sides about one hundred feet each, and was complete with kitchens, dining-rooms, sculleries, bath-houses, etc.

The service was performed by five Indian boys and several Indian women domestics, whilst the cook was quite an important personage who enjoyed great privileges, owing to his being none other than a Barbadian named King, so often referred to in the report of Sir Roger Casement on the Putumayo atrocities. Not only was this man cook, but he was a kind of policeman, chief flogger, and bodyguard to the agent, and was the principal actor in the shooting or assassination of a young Colombian shortly before my arrival there.

In a very few days I recognized that I had indeed fallen among people with whom I should have to exercise great care and caution in my dealings, and, sinking my individuality, I ordered my conduct in such a manner as I thought would be the most convenient for me. Although desiring only to attend strictly to the work for which I had been engaged, circumstances soon were such that this was impossible.

During my first five months in El Encanto many difficulties were put in the way of my attending to the keeping of the books and accounts. The agent called upon me almost daily to accompany him on his visits of inspection to the chacaras and other places where certain agricultural pursuits were in progress. I was, ultimately, obliged to make my position clear and demand the keys of the offices to take charge of the books and correspondence.

Under great pressure these were handed to me, and upon looking through the office I found that nothing had been written in the book, nor had the slightest record



CLEARED GROUND AND COMPOUNDS AT EL ENCANTO

of transactions been kept, for a period of some fifteen months. This opened my eyes to the obvious determination of the agent not to allow any but Peruvians in his confidence to see the inner workings of the agency.

Apart from the principal house at El Encanto, which I have described, there were, surrounding the house, forming a sort of compound, the kitchen and cook-house for the inferior employees, also several buildings used for storing inflammables. Occupying another portion was to be found the joiners' shop, the carpenters and two Indian labourers always being kept busy in preparing fine woods for the walls and ceilings of the establishment already referred to.

Close to the carpenters' shop and adjoining his residence was the "convent." This was a room with one small window, and was built on two sides of mud, while the others were of palm slats or laths, and it was strengthened by heavy planking, laid from wall to wall, forming a ceiling.

This room, always referred to as the "convento" (convent), was the living-room during the day of Indian women who did not happen to be attached to any employee. These women were locked up securely at 6 p.m. and the keys given into the hands of the agent or his paramour. Any Indian girl in the convent was obliged to work in the fields during the day, as also were the Indian paramours of inferior employees, and once inside did not leave it until such time as an employee came along who desired to take her as his wife for the time being, which he could do on applying to the agent.

These arrangements, very naturally, are rarely based on any real mutual affection or attempts at genuine domesticity. The woman is rarely consulted as to her wishes, and is simply told that she is ordered to the quarters of the man who has got permission to take her. It can easily be understood that the Indian girl can have very little respect for her lord, but a very real fear of the whip, if she gives any offence. She must have a preference for men of her own race and language, and the Indian boys employed round about the establishment know this.

The result is that these women are continually unfaithful, and upon the Indian boy boasting of his amatory achievements the "husband" soon learns of it, and the girl is subjected to a severe thrashing, not always with the whip. Bumped and knocked about until exhausted by her punishment, her screams and protests turn into loud moans and groanings, which only cease when sleep lays hold upon her.

CHAPTER XI

THE PUTUMAYO (*Continued*)

Indian guards—Indian houses—The author as a peon—Delivery of rubber by Indians—Cassava bread—Coca—Its preparation and uses—Issue of rations—A shocking incident—Treatment of Indians—Indian babies—Tattooing—Characteristics of Indians—Burial customs—Domestic arrangements—Indian games—The "manguare" or native telegraphing.

THIS kind of thing is so common that while at El Encanto I have heard three or four women being subjected to this brutal kind of treatment in the course of a single evening, never a protest being raised by the agent unless he happened to be drinking or playing cards, when he might occasionally call his Indian boy and send him to the seat of marital strife with an order to the man to hurry up and make his woman quiet.

The department where the inferior employees were housed was a long palm slat and thatched building erected upon piles, and containing some twenty-four rooms, each perhaps eight feet square, which serve as residence of employees such as cooks, sailors, and overseers, with their women and, as often as not, children.

No furniture is provided, not even a bucket or a pitcher, nor yet a bed, which obliges the employee to either bring one from the store, costing from £10 to £12, or make a substitute of any rough timber he may get.

Sanitary conveniences are not considered necessary, and at times the offal below and around the house, fallen from the rooms above, is indescribable. Were it not for the pigs, frightful epidemics must have broken out, for even as things were the health of employees housed under conditions such as these was a constant drain upon the scanty supply of rough medicines occasionally to be found in the store.

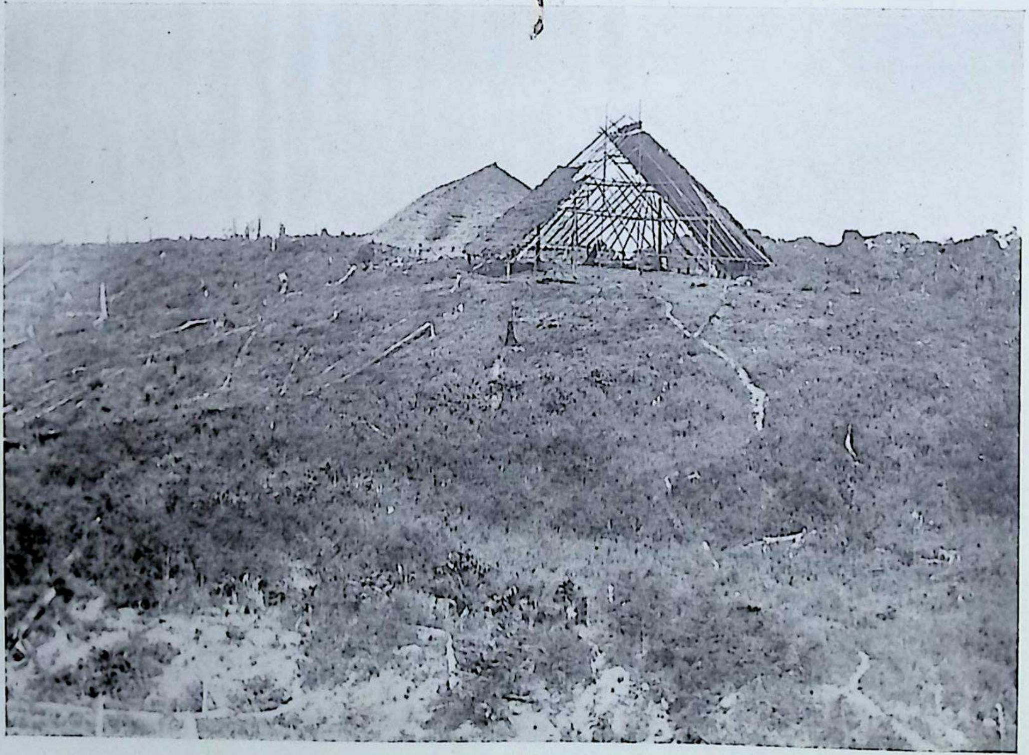
The Indians lived in two houses on the estate; one, similar to that above described, but smaller, was devoted to the "carabineers," or armed boys, who were given rifles and shot-guns, owing to the confidence shown in them as fairly reliable instruments in the pursuit of Indians running away from the district, a duty in which these men rarely failed, and the reader can readily imagine what happens when any runaway shows resistance.

The custom in El Encanto was to send these armed boys out unaccompanied by any responsible Colombian, or similar employee, the reason for which is obvious. White men giving evidence in a Court of Law in Peru are protected, while an Indian's evidence is of no value, as he is an "infidel."

Another reason is the general practice common in the countries named of restricting the liberty of the Indian, whether civilized or not.

The remaining house of any value is shown in the illustrations, just behind another which is in course of construction. They are both built and inhabited by a tribe of Indians called Jeyas, who, although their house is outside the compound, at a distance of some five hundred yards, not less are under the rigorous administration of this agency. Compare these latter structures with the principal ones, the product of the labour of those poor souls, in many cases at the cost of their lives.

After being some six months in Encanto, I became very



INDIAN HOUSES AT EL ENCANTO, PUTUMAYO

morbid, and my life was a burden to me because of the weight upon my conscience of the life I was obliged to live. Everything seemed hopeless, for the financial difficulties I was in when leaving Nauta were rendered much worse by the fact that the rubber sent to Europe by the commission house in Iquitos brought exceedingly poor prices.

This had the effect of placing me heavily in debt, to the extent of several hundreds of pounds sterling, and my creditors, knowing of my presence in the Putumayo with the firm of Arana, applied to the Iquitos branch for payment of my debt, a demand which was acceded to without any reference to myself, though no money changed hands, as the Iquitos traders were debtors to Arana, and the amounts were simply placed to my debit and their credit. Consequently, I personally became heavily in debt to my patrons, for an amount which would require months of patience and self-denial.

I was now a victim of peonage ; from this day on my life was a living hell, and it must not be wondered at that for a while I lost all hope of ever becoming a decent member of society again, and must frankly admit that I adopted, without thought or contemplation, some of the many habits of my companions, each peculiar to the country, and only upon the arrival of the English Commission, sent to investigate into the atrocities, was I able to make a really serious attempt to get out of the rut into which I had so unfortunately fallen.

Several months had elapsed without an opportunity of my seeing Indians in large bodies, when one morning the agent informed me that the Indians would on the following day commence to bring in the whole of the product collected by them during that "fabrico," as the time elapsing between each general delivery is called, and that he would like me to supervise the weighing and storing of that delivered by each section.

Early next morning I was aroused by the noise of the arrival of the Indians and employees, and, hastily dressing, I prepared to get a good look at the arrival of the main bodies, who were encamped at the edge of the bush, about two miles distant.

Shortly afterwards they began to arrive ; a long line of humped bodies, and on the backs of each what appeared at first sight to be a huge bundle of faggots covered with grass, but which turned out to be a number of " tails " of rubber, bundled together in lots of from eight to sixteen, and weighing some forty to fifty kilos or even more, which weight each Indian had brought through the forest from two to five days' journey, with no other food than " cassava " bread, some dried meat, and perhaps a little coca leaf, which he chews to enable him to sustain the fatigue occasioned by the long journey and heavy load.

Cassava bread is made of a paste compounded of the root of the mandioca, from which the poison has been extracted in a similar manner to that in vogue in Brazil. It is baked on a large, flat earthenware platter, and when cooked looks like a large Scotch shortcake, but instead of being crisp it is sodden and sour to the taste.

Coca, used by them, is prepared in a manner different from that in use by the mountain Indian races of Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Colombia.

The mountain races chew the natural leaf, which is placed in the mouth with a little common lime or potash ; but the Indians in the forest regions, particularly those of the Putumayo, toast the leaves and mix them with wood ash, or the roasted leaves of a kind of sycamore or setico tree.

The whole is then pulverized with a large pestle and mortar, when it is put up into little bags. As required a quantity is placed in the mouth, and becoming mixed with saliva makes a nauseous, revolting mass.

The saliva when swallowed causes the user to lose all sense of hunger, due to the presence of cocaine, caused by the action of the lime or potash mixed with it freeing the cocaine from the leaves. I have used it on many occasions during my wanderings, and find that it is a great help and does not appear to leave any ill effect.

The Indians upon arriving were marshalled into sections, in a long line, each tribe separated, the men occupying the front line, the women and children behind, the whole reminding one of a body of soldiers on parade in open order for inspection.

Then a roll is taken of all those present to detect if any had escaped the vigilance of the armed guards who had brought them from their homes, and so that the agent could calculate how many kilos of rice, farina, and tins of sardines would be required to give the Indians one meal before leaving again for the bush. If any were absent measures were immediately taken to ascertain their whereabouts.

After the rubber had all been weighed and stored the Indians were ready to receive their food, which had been prepared in the meantime, and huge copper cauldrons containing a mass of half-boiled rice were brought out and placed upon the ground.

Several employees took up a position close to the cauldrons. Each one was furnished with a ladle, which holds about what could be got into a large breakfast-cup. They also had a basket or box containing small tins of sardines of a very inferior brand, and often not in a fit state for consumption.

The Indians were then allowed to pass, and each one received a ladle of rice and a tin of sardines.

No plates or similar crockery are furnished, consequently the poor creatures supply themselves with any rusty and dirty cans they may find lying about or with bits of dirty leaves, paper, etc., into which their ration of boiling, partly cooked rice is placed. I have often seen Indians of both sexes receive this hot stuff into their bare hands, tossing it from one hand to the other to cool it, and get it quickly swallowed, so that they could go into line again in the hope of a second helping. The serving-out of this food occupies but a few moments, but when there is no more rice to distribute a scrimmage generally occurs among the men and boys for a place as near as possible to the cauldron, to secure the leavings that stick to the inside of the pans, though they pay for their gain by burning their fingers severely. On one occasion I saw a very shocking thing in this connection.

An Indian boy had wormed his way close to the edge of the cauldron, and when the employee in charge let the Indians fight for the pickings, this boy was the first to seize a large piece of burnt rice, which had stuck very hard to the pan, and in his efforts to detach it, the crowd pushed him over the side and would not make way for him to get out again, in spite of the agonizing cries for help to get out of the scalding mass, cries which drew to the spot an American employee and myself, when with directed energies we succeeded in dispersing the crowd and releasing the unfortunate boy. He was terribly burned all over his head and body, and his buttocks and other parts were partly roasted. We carried him away to the house and covered him with olive oil, the only thing likely to relieve him which we could get, but his cries were heartrending.

He finally broke away from us, and for the remainder of that day ran all over the place wringing his hands in his agony, which must have been awful, at last falling asleep from pure exhaustion.

The following morning he was not in such a bad state of suffering, so we smothered him in iodoform, and though Mr. Smith, the American referred to above, desired the lad to remain for treatment, the agent would not give his consent. Some short time after the chief of this boy's section came into headquarters, and when asked how the boy was, he informed us that owing to want of care dirt had got into the burns, causing them to inflame, resulting in the boy's death.

Having received their meal, the Indians are again placed in charge of armed guards, and though they may have several days' journey in front of them, no pretence of giving them food to sustain themselves is made, and away they go, tired, hungry, and sad, to return to the bush to commence another fabrico. Though the men have brought large loads of rubber, and are nearly exhausted, they must carry back to their districts heavy loads. The employees must have food, and must buy at the stores supplies for another period of four or five months of such things as rice, coffee, beans, sugar, and tinned provisions for themselves, also the goods which will be required to barter for the rubber which the Indians bring in. Therefore these poor men are obliged to carry back loads, much harder to handle than rubber, which is soft and gives to the body. This cannot be said of packing-cases, and consequently the Indians return to their homes full of sore places, where the skin and flesh have been irritated by contact with the hard loads.

The women also carry loads just like the men, and their burden is often increased by the weight of their babes, and the baskets in which they carry all kinds of odds and ends.

It is a pitiful sight to see a whole family loaded like mules, even tiny tots, just able to walk, carrying small packages quite heavy enough to cause them permanent injury.

It is a strange yet very common sight to see women come in carrying rubber, and at the same time carrying a babe born on the road, covered all over with rubber sap, in order to keep it warm and protect it from flies and similar pests.

Another peculiarity among these Indian people that I first noticed when the caucho was brought in, was the custom of removing all the small hairs from the eyebrows, eyelashes, armpits, and other parts of the body. The eyebrows and lashes were replaced with painted black lines, produced by the application of the juice of the "huitoc." This fruit the women also apply to their bodies, using a design which passes from the shoulder over the breasts, gradually meeting about the centre of the thighs, where it passes round the hips to the buttock. It terminates at a point about the base of the spine. Curious though it may seem, the design prevents their nakedness from becoming repulsive or, at any rate, pronounced. The male Indian covers his generative organs with a strip of the bark of a tree. He is very particular about this covering, as any exposure is looked upon as an act of extreme shamelessness. This custom, as it is carried out, has a peculiar physiological effect on the native, and it also makes it extremely difficult for the medical man in dealing with cases of venereal disease.

The Huitotos, and, in fact, all the Indians with whom I came in contact while in this region, are cleanly in their habits. They spend hours in the water, playing and gambolling in the rivers and creeks, just like a shoal of porpoises or otters. When in contact with civilized people they will do almost anything to get soap of any description, but more particularly the scented kinds. Until they come into contact with the so-called "white" men, they are free from diseases of a repugnant nature, are averse to polygamy, and in their domestic life are quiet and inoffensive. They respect the old and infirm, but in cases of senile decay or accidents, and diseases which positively prevent the victims from being of the slightest use to themselves or others, they have a custom which is common among savage people. At a sick Indian's request a grave is dug and the martyr interred alive. Cruel practice though this may seem to be, it undoubtedly springs from none but humanitarian motives, arising from an unwillingness to see their dear ones in suffering.

The chiefs of tribes when they die are buried in the centre of the floor of their house, along with all which they possessed at their death, excepting their dancing-sticks, blowpipes, macanas (wooden swords), and other simple implements which denote their rank. These are handed to the succeeding chief upon his approval by the tribe, who abandon the house and construct another at a distance.

All other members of the tribes are buried at some little distance from the house, but everything they possessed at their death is interred with them.

Their houses are peculiarly built, the thatch reaching almost to the earth, making them look like gigantic hives, an impression which is strengthened by their elliptical form. The interior of the house is always in semi-darkness, and when one enters from the daylight several moments must elapse before it is possible to distinguish objects or their arrangement.

Inside the house special places are reserved for each family. In every case they have their own fire, which is continually kept alight, thus emphasizing the fact of their separateness and that their domestic duties and arrangements are quite distinct. About the centre of one of the sides will be found a raised stage, which is reached by a precarious ladder, made by cutting a series of holes in a section of palm tree. It is here that the chief will be found and the members of his family. Almost in the centre of some huts is a long springy log of perhaps some forty feet in length, raised from the ground on strong forks, this pole entering greatly into the diversions of the Indians when they are in the mood.

When it is destined to be used in any of their festivities all the young men and women will draw near and, to the beat of drums and rough music from a kind of cane flute or whistle, one by one they will jump upon it. This causes it to vibrate, and when all are dancing upon its length to a regular time the spring or rebound of the pole will throw them several feet into the air, and they keep time so perfectly that they always meet the pole with their feet as it attains the limit of its spring, and accidents rarely happen.

Close to the chief's platform is suspended the "manguare," a kind of telegraph used by the Indians in conversing with others at distances from six to twelve miles. This is made possible by means of a recognized system of beats. The manguare, or telegraph, consists of the hollowed-out sections of two trees, one being much larger than the other. The small one is about four feet long and the other about five and a half. The small one is called the male and the large the female, and in hollowing these trunks, in order to make them sonorous, they are burned and cut in such a manner that there can be no doubt when one looks inside them as to which sex they refer. The trunks are suspended with danta hide from the main cross beam of a kind of rude altar, from which are hung human skulls and other gruesome relics, minus the lower jaw and the upper teeth, which have been pierced and form part of the very much prized necklets of the chief and other members of the tribe. These relics are the skulls of enemies slain in intertribal warfare, or particular enemies of the members of the tribe, who have at some time fallen victims to a feud.

The manguares are separated from each other by a distance of about two feet. Repeated taps are made upon them concurrently and independently in recognized codes. The signals are made with a heavy kind of drum-stick, having congealed crude rubber upon one end, and further secured by binding the rubber tightly with strands of tucuma palm. Leather or hide does not enter into its composition, as I have seen asserted. The manguare always provides the greater part of the "music" at Indian dances, and, owing to its timbre, the time for the various movements of their feet is taken from its beat.

While in this district I was fortunate enough to visit one of the villages during one of their Indian holidays, permission having been given for them to invite members of surrounding tribes, and this gave me an excellent opportunity of witnessing a revival of some of their customs, while still in their semi-savage stage, which I will proceed to describe in the following chapter.

CHAPTER XII

THE HUITOTO INDIANS

An invitation to a native dance—The emissary—His dress, etc.—Arrival at an Indian village—Indian beverage—Preparations—Arrival of visitors—An attack—Dresses, food, etc.—Beginning of the dance—Description of dance, etc.—The Witotos—Meaning of the word—Marriage customs—Beliefs—Poisons—Language—Government—Life under the white man—Cunning dealings—Forced labour—An awakening—A resolution—Departure.

A PERUVIAN prominently named in the report of the English Commission which came to inquire into the treatment of natives was given a reward for certain doubtful services to the agents of the company, and he had been nominated chief of a very large section of territory containing some five hundred families of Indians. He knew that he could not be liked by them, so in order to ingratiate himself with them for a period, he came to Encanto for permission to give a holiday to the whole of the tribes in his territory. This was to wind up with a large dance, at which they would have complete liberty in every way. The application was listened to by the agent, who, much against his wishes and after considerable demur, gave his consent.

Two days after this there came into the compound a fine young Indian as an emissary carrying invitations, his head covered with a kind of crown composed of the red and green feathers of parrots and parakeets. His body was painted red with berries from the achiote (*Bixa orellana*), over which were stripes, curls, and twists forming an elaborate system of tattooing, in red, green, and black. In his hand he carried a long spear-shaped stick of very fine wood and clever design. This had been carved out of the heart of a tree of a dark rosewood colour. The spear had a length of about ten feet, and at the bottom was shaped like an old tilting lance; at its base it had a thickness of slightly more than half an inch in diameter, gradually tapering to a point where it reached an egg-shaped hollow ball, containing one or two small pebbles to make it rattle. This was adorned with streamers of green and yellow palm shoots, torn into shreds.

Slung across his shoulder he carried a large bag made out of the inner bark of a certain tree (*Tururi*). It contained many small packets of "coca" wrapped in green leaves. In a dried and hollowed-out kind of calabash (*Crescentia cujete*) pierced by a small hole, he carried a quantity of boiled essence of tobacco leaves, remarkably like the oily matter in the tube of a dirty tobacco pipe.

Passing among the most important Indians, he presented to each one a packet of coca, and dipping a thin stick into the tobacco juice, he placed a little of the syrupy black matter on the tip of his tongue, inviting others to do likewise.

These preliminaries concluded, he addressed all present, inviting them to the feasting and dancing. Other packets of coca having been given to him in sign of acceptance, he retired, to perform the same function with other tribes.

The morning of the dance arrived, and having ordered my horse, I took to the bush road, one of the very few where one could ride an animal, and after a journey of four hours arrived at the site selected for the feast.

Passing into the principal house, I found that the chief's platform had been arranged for my accommodation, and I could observe the women preparing huge quantities of "cahuana" in large earthenware cauldrons of their own make. This drink is a concoction of which the base is the fruit of the "aguaje" palm (*Mirity*), which gives it a peculiar dirty yellowish colour. The mode of preparing this drink is repugnant, although it is pleasing and at the same time nourishing, because of the alimentary properties of the oil which the fruit contains.

Before noon most of the Indian visitors had arrived in the vicinity of the house. Their camps could be seen at the edges of the clearing, where they were occupied in the preparation of their attire, and the arranging of their presents.

At noon everything was ready for their reception; the males could be seen preparing for a simulated surprise attack upon the house, and it was surprising to see how seriously everything was carried out. Quite ludicrous attempts at concealment were made as they gradually crept forward and surrounded the house. When all were in their places at a distance of some fifteen yards, a signal was given, and they rushed from under cover brandishing spears, clubs, etc., and discharging fire-arms.

Taking the house by surprise they swarmed over the thatch and took charge of the interior, jumping, shouting, and gesticulating in a manner that was intensely exciting. The twitching of their facial muscles and the glitter of their eyes demonstrated that even they were carried away by the realistic spectacle.

Having entered into possession of the house, the Indian visitors were regaled with cahuana, coca, and tobacco juice, and then gradually the excitement subsided, to end in a low murmur, caused by their subdued conversation with each other ; not until then had I any time to observe their attire. The majority of the men wore garments and disguises made of the inner bark of a tree already referred to, which were painted and cut to represent animals and fishes. These demonstrated great cleverness in idea and execution.

Other men and boys wore nothing beyond the conventional loin strap and a plentiful supply of tattooing, but the women were picturesquely attired in a large collar of beads, about fifteen inches wide, which was secured behind their shoulders. The beads hung loosely from the shoulders, covering their breasts and coming to a point about the bottom of the abdomen. The weight of each collar of beads would be about twelve pounds, and they were well worked in symmetrical designs. Upon their heads they each wore an ornament shaped like a crown, and made from the red and green tail feathers of various kinds of parrots and macaws. They also used armlets of dried grass, fastened above the elbows and at the wrists. At the knees and ankles were leglets of the same material, and, in the space between, the leg was first smeared with crude rubber. This served as an adhesive for the down of various birds, principally of a kind of falcon and the garça, which provides the ospreys greatly favoured by ladies in our own country.

The men used leglets of the dried shells of a certain palm nut, and wore around their necks collars made from the teeth of monkeys, tapir, coati-mundi, alligator, and the various members of the feline tribe.

The writer has had necklets of human teeth from these people, and has possessed a unique collection of necklets of all descriptions, acquired among them; but, unfortunately, these were lost in the sinking of a steamer, and cannot be replaced. These Indians have been despoiled by collectors of curios of all they had of any value, and do not now practise their arts.

The Indians are very fond of the rana, a large edible frog, which I have tried at table and found very good, in fact, as good as any that can be had in France. At these dances one sees great numbers brought in as presents.

Before dancing commences the visitors deliver the presents which they have brought, consisting mainly of fruit, fresh and dried meat and fish, trade goods such as cloth, sewing cotton, needles and trimmings, and also, suspended in strings on long wands, the grub of a large beetle, found in the sap of different kinds of palm trees, which, when fried, is considered by the Indians (and by some whites) as a delicacy. Then there is the "casaramanu" or "humay," being the contents of a kind of housewife's stock-pot, very highly seasoned with fresh pepper.

As soon as darkness began to fall the dancing commenced, and was kept up until the following morning.

The dances are extremely quaint, the music being sung in half-tones. The words are impromptu, one voice chanting a verse on any peculiarity of a member of the tribe or some peculiar event of their lives which has come into prominence. Sometimes the subject matter of their songs is some memory of a cannibalistic feast, of a victory, a defeat, or other event which they may care to recall, or it may be some real or fancied injustice.

While the dance is in progress all the chiefs and principal men sit around a large fire and chew coca or suck the tobacco juice ; the calabash which contains it being passed from one to another according to seniority. Among themselves they propound a riddle and oblige the witch doctor of the tribe to deduce the solution from the conversation, and he is not allowed to take part in the festivities until he does solve the problem. They are very clever at this form of amusement, and the author has often wondered at the originality of the riddles or problems they have propounded and still more at the clever solutions.

During the dances, which are not unlike our own old English round dances, the men who form the outer rings, shake their dancing-sticks in time to the crude music, and mark the rhythm by thumping their feet every four or five movements, causing the shells around their knees to sound with rhythmic emphasis. The fall of the feet of the dancers upon the mud floor can be heard at a considerable distance.

Towards morning all began to tire, exhausted by their continued efforts, the imbibing of cahuana, and the use of the narcotic tobacco extract. Some were even to be found asleep in out-of-the-way corners, and just as the day broke preparations were made for the retirement of all to their own houses, and half an hour after the sun had risen all was quietness and not a moving soul could be seen around the place.

The dance above referred to took place at a section of the Aranas territory known as Esmeralda. There were present in great numbers representatives of many tribes which make up the Huitoto nation, the principal among them being Monanisayes, Faijenes, Jeyas, Naimenes, Siguenes, Quitopeises, Guidones, Effos, Siquivias, etc.

The Huitoto race (pronounced We-toe-toe), though numerous, was never a powerful one. The men have thick short bodies and are deep-chested, though their limbs are peculiarly shaped and twisted, from which fact they derived their name, meaning mosquito.

The women when young, though rather slight, are well formed, but as they get older lose their comely shapes, due to the practice of carrying their children on their backs, and when resting or feeding them from the breast, they throw their bodies to one side, in order that the child may sit upon their hips. When walking through the bush they bend their toes inwards, but the men bend theirs outwards, except when crossing a pole or fallen tree trunk, when the toes are required to assure a secure foothold.

The Huitotos have no known marriage customs, beyond marrying outside their own blood relations, and they always get their women from other friendly tribes.

They treat their women with care and are very jealous of them, though they respect them greatly. Polygamy is rare but not unknown, for I knew two chiefs who had several wives, a custom copied from the so-called white races. They rarely abandon their womenfolk, and then only for very grave offences, but the Indian women are naturally virtuous, until they have come into contact with white people.

When an Indian woman abandons her tribe to accompany a white man or woman she insists that the white person should cut off the anklets which she wears, and even should she return to her people, she never uses them again. When a widow, and too old to engage the attention of a possible husband, she herself cuts off the anklets, as a sign that she submits to her condition, but when it happens that she is desirous of remarrying, she cuts off only one anklet, to show that she is in the marriage market.

The men do no domestic duties, nor do they cut firewood nor bring water for their women ; but, when a child is born, the woman goes about her ordinary duties, while the man lies in his hammock groaning, making believe that he is suffering great pain.

The arms of the Huitoto people consist at the present day of the shot-gun, rifle, and machete, but until quite recently it was possible to get fine throwing spears from them, and on one occasion I was lucky to see some young men practising with this weapon. Their quickness of hand and eye was truly remarkable. They stood in front of one another with a bunch of spears held between the fingers of the left hand, with the barbs upwards, taking them with the right hand and throwing them with extreme dexterity, catching their opponents' dart while in the air with the left hand in such a manner that it was ready to be thrown again.

In their beliefs they are very superstitious, like all savage bush races.

They speak of a good spirit called by them " Usinamuy " (pronounced You-sin-am-wée), while their evil spirit is " Taifu " (pronounced Tie-fo), neither of whom they propitiate with ceremonies of any description, though when it thunders and in times of tempest, they believe it is the work of the evil one who is angry. I am of the opinion that they are, on the whole, fatalistic, and that they only speak of, and think of, these spirits in their ignorance of creation, and that they are the outcome of the same kind of fear as children have of " bogeys " and other similar imaginations of fancy.

They are quite ripe for any kind of religious teaching, and would give good results under the tuition and guidance of teachers of any doctrine, and they would just as easily become converted to Judaism, Shintoism, or Latter-day Saints as Catholics or Protestants.

The Huitotos as a nation have no recognized system of face mutilation, but each tribe and sub-tribe has its distinctive method. Some perforate the nostrils, some the lips, while many use lip ornaments or "labrets," of metal such as brass, or any bit of pottery they may find. Though they do not now make their labrets of native pottery, it is evident that in days gone by it was their custom.

They do not fish, as do the natives in other rivers, with harpoon, spear, or hook, but at night frequent the edges of the rivers, lakes, creeks, etc., with torches of a resinous wood, called by them urare, which splits quite easily and burns well. With this torch they are easily able to locate the fish as they rise to the surface attracted by the light, when they either impale them with a short barbed spear or grasp them with their hands. They also are conversant with the use of certain vegetable poisons which they throw into the water, the poison stupefying the fish but not affecting their flesh as food.

The language of the Huitotos is easily learned and is fairly complete. It is a language, and not a collection of words without prepositions, conjunctions, or articles, as I have seen stated by one writer who passed through the district some years ago.

Taking a general view of the Indians in the Putumayo, I find that the Huitotos, Ocainas, and Ricigoros are the most docile and peace-loving, in that way more easily conquered; while the Boras, Andoques, and other races, are of a higher type, brave, intelligent, and consequently, in the attempts made by whites to conquer them, they have suffered most, and are now almost exterminated.

The Huitotos speak a language which is understood by all their tribes, but that of each small tribe has its peculiarities, and contains slight differences from the general tongue ; the same obtaining in the language of the Boras, Andoques, and other nations ; but these languages are quite different from Huitoto.

Having now described the people themselves, I must endeavour to explain the system under which they are governed by the white caucheros or rubber agents of the district.

Besides the head offices and administrative department at Encanto, there were also ten stations or sections each in charge of a manager, who was only responsible to the agent or his assistant for his administration of the section in his charge, and for the system employed in keeping the Indians hard at work in their eternal task of rubber gathering.

Each section comprised at its headquarters a compound consisting of a house for the manager himself and Indian family, servants, etc., while rough huts were provided for his assistants, who were the immediate supervisors of the work of the tribes forming the station, varying from eight to fifty families, or fifty to three or four hundred men, boys, and women ; for it must be remembered that the women help in this labour.

The name of each male and female Indian is kept in a book by the manager, in which is supposed to be shown the amount of rubber due by the Indian, for which he has received in advance trade goods of but little value ; when he delivers rubber it is sometimes noted in the book to his credit, but more generally this is omitted.

The book is also supposed to be a record of births, marriages, deaths, runaways, etc., also stating from what cause, but this is rarely truthfully filled in.

Under the manager's assistants, who live either with the Indians or in huts close to them, these people are caused to go into the bush collecting rubber, a task which is carried on in a very primitive manner.

The Indians stroll through the forest slashing and gashing the trees with their machetes indiscriminately, causing the sap to flow. When this ceases, it becomes coagulated and adheres to the tree. The Indian afterwards goes round picking from the tree the strips of coagulated latex and places it in a small basket which he carries for the purpose; and when this is full he takes what he has collected and washes it by pounding it on boards until all extraneous matter, such as moss or fragments of bark, is freed. The strips are then placed with others in large rough troughs and subjected to pressure, giving them a long, sausage-like shape of about four feet, the weight being from three to five kilos. This mass, when fairly well set, is taken out of the trough and wound round with strips of rubber to keep it from falling to pieces, when it is allowed to dry, and is then ready for delivery to the white overseers. If the amount of rubber is not of the weight stipulated to pay for the Indian's last purchase, he is often thrashed or otherwise cruelly ill-treated, a fact conclusively proved by Sir Roger Casement in his report and also in that of the British Commission to this region.

The Indians, upon delivering their rubber to the overseers, state their modest requirements, such as shot, gunpowder, shirts, cloth, fish-hooks, etc., and receive at the white man's discretion goods to the value of about one-eighth of the rubber. Sometimes it so happens that they do not want goods, but would like, for instance, a fowl, dog, or cat, for which they will often work for months without any other reward. As the manager of the section is paid according to the profit which his rubber season shows, he always has a supply of these animals and fowls on hand for sale to the Indians.

Such, however, are his own property, and in order that he may reap some of the benefit which would ordinarily accrue to the company, he has a system which prevents the Indian from receiving the full value of the live stock which he purchases.

The Indian, for instance, will buy a dog and take it away to his home, but as the animal is not so well treated as at his own home, he soon regains his liberty and returns through the bush to his original master, quickly followed by the Indian in search of him; but the dog is safely hidden away, and the Indian has to be satisfied with a promise that so soon as he is found he will be returned. Barely has the Indian gone when the dog is given his liberty, ready to serve for another transaction of a like character.

Similar methods are observed with regard to cats, etc., but with fowls the proceeding is even more ingenious.

The white man will sell a cock and one or two hens, knowing that the Indian will not eat eggs, but will save them for hatching purposes, becoming in a short time owner of quite a lot of fowls. The manager will take an interest in them, and will advise the Indian as to the best manner of feeding and keeping them in good condition, and when he considers that the Indian has sufficient fowls to represent a goodly sum of money, he might send him to another section and retain his fowls; or, if he himself is leaving the district, he will sell them to his successor, and so the game goes on, to the advantage of the civilized whites and the spoliation of these children of nature.

The Indians are not only forced to gather rubber under these and similar conditions, but have to work in the chacaras (plantations) which exist in the district, without any reward whatever. They also have to bring in fuel, fruits, game, etc., for the employees and their concubines, and look after the mules and other cattle where existent.

Add to all this toil the fact that they have no real liberty; that they are continually under the vigilance of armed carabineers already mentioned and the dread of the lash of the overseers, and one can imagine that there are few such dark spots on this earth as the rubber-producing districts of the Amazon. Strong measures for complete reform would be abundantly justified, for, as Cicero said, "Slavery is the worst of all evils, to be repelled, if need be, not only by war, but even by death."

During the whole of the time I remained with the company in this awful region, where, as the brothers Hare say, in their *Guesses at Truth*, "Nothing is more lawless except a slave," and where one's food, life, and earnings were dependent upon what Wesley describes as "That execrable sum of all villainies, commonly called Slave Trade," can it be wondered at that I became convinced that I could never leave the country? Obliged to do what I was paid for, I continued to work while my very soul was in agony; every day a trial, every year an age. It was not until the Commission, with Sir Roger Casement, arrived on the Putumayo that I was roused from my lethargy and abandon, and I take this opportunity of expressing my gratitude to the English members of the Commission for encouraging me to feel almost a man again, and to be able to work for the benefit of suffering humanity in South America. This is a work to which I hope to devote many more years, if spared, and in which I hope to induce resolute and right-thinking men to join, so that the little-known regions of South America will be lifted out of the darkness which envelops them, and give up their secrets to the light, for " There is no object so foul that intense light will not make it beautiful."

I left Encanto early in the year 1911, along with various members of the English Commission, as my services had been transferred to La Chorrera ; and our launch meeting the one from this place, I transferred my belongings, and parted from the Commission with great regret. Shortly after, I arrived at La Chorrera, where I spent several months under conditions much the same as those existing in Encanto.

However, I had more opportunity of studying the Indians here than I had had while at Encanto, and spent many week-ends among them ; but only on one occasion did I ever again visit Encanto. This I did by traversing the intervening bush on foot, accompanied only by an Indian and my dog, a fine specimen of a race introduced by the luckless explorer Robuchon, who lost his life in these regions under circumstances which have never been satisfactorily explained.

This dog of mine was a fine and strong brute, very attached to me and I to him ; for he was my constant companion by day and night, and accompanied me on many occasions when I was compelled to travel the forest paths the whole night through. He would never let anyone whom he did not like approach me.

When I did eventually leave the region I took him with me. This occurred in the latter days of the month of September, 1911, when, embarking on the launch *Witota*, I said good-bye to a few friends and shortly left this post with its buildings of slave-quarried stone from the falls which give it its name. I heaved a sigh of content as, looking around at my many cases of valuable and interesting curios and relics of the people, I thought that at last I was free, little thinking of the varied adventures and trials that were still to befall me.

CHAPTER XIII

FROM THE PUTUMAYO TO MANAOS

The river steamer *Asturiana*—Passengers—Peruvian officers and soldiers—A good shot and fresh meat—A peculiar superstition and its result—A rough awakening—Wrecked on the Amazon—Marooned—Relief in sight—A disappointment—Relief at last—The s.s. *Hilda*—*En route* to Iquitos—Among friends—Arrival at Iquitos—More disappointment—Departure from Iquitos—The River Javary—Turtles and their habits—Arrival at Manaos.

OUR launch made good speed, as it was necessary to meet the steamer for Iquitos at or about the mouth of the Igara-Parana.

This we were fortunate enough to do, and I lost no time in embarking all my cases and boxes, including my dog "Gyp," on the steamer *Asturiana*, which was returning so heavily laden that her surplus cargo of rubber was placed in a barge and towed alongside.

The first two days of our life on board the *Asturiana* were quiet and uneventful, although at the frontier posts we had taken as passengers some Peruvian officers and their families who were returning to Iquitos with a number of sick soldiers suffering with beri-beri, acquired during a raid against the Colombian occupants of the Caqueta, in territory claimed by both Peru and Colombia. In addition to these passengers were a number of sick military embarked at Encanto, who had been on frontier outpost duty.

About five in the evening of the fourth day we arrived off a large sand-bank close to the mouth of the river, where a fine large buck was seen standing on the bank, evidently intent on crossing. The captain ordered the engines to be stopped, and, taking a .22 calibre Winchester automatic rifle, he put out in a canoe for the sand-bank to see if it was possible to get within good shooting range ; at my request he allowed me to accompany him with my dog, which was a very clever hunter.

Grounding the canoe, we gradually crept toward the deer by taking advantage of the undulations of the sand-bank, at the same time being favoured by the direction of the wind, which blew in our faces. Upon looking over one of the knolls I saw that the animal was strolling slowly in our direction, so, crouching well down and restraining the dog, I saw that the captain had raised his gun and was waiting for a favourable opportunity to assure a good shoulder shot, which presented itself almost immediately. The buck fell to his knees, but recovering himself almost instantaneously was in full career, evidently not badly wounded, and seemed likely to escape us.

Loosing Gyp, I had no need to set him to work, for he was off like a flash and, rapidly overhauling the wounded "cervus," caused him to change the direction of his flight, which had been a part of the forest at the extreme end of the bank, and to make for the river. Becoming exhausted from the effects of the wound, it was only a question of a moment before Gyp's teeth were gripping him and, borne down by the weight of the dog, he was making very little struggle for existence when we arrived, and his sufferings were soon ended with a hunting knife.

The sailor who had brought us from the steamer now came along, and carrying the dead buck we were soon on our way back, being received with expressions of delight by the invalids, who welcomed the idea of fresh meat in place of the preserved food which was all the steamer carried; but I heard one Indian say that it was a bad omen for us to have killed a deer which had fallen in our way in such a providential manner. I did not pay much attention to him, knowing that the deer is the "totum" of many Amazon tribes (who do not eat it). That same evening we made a good meal of the liver and other parts, and some of the worst cases among the invalids were given small portions, which they consumed with very evident relish. Strange as it may seem, the following day I had good reason for remembering the remark of the Indian.

During the night we had left the mouth of the Putumayo and had begun the ascent of the Amazon, which at this particular time was at its lowest, and had passed a point just below the small village of Matura, which, owing to the river being rather confined and being in a bend, is considered very dangerous, for the waters rush with tremendous force directly against a huge bank of solid rock which impels the water from it at a tangent, causing a swift cross current which none but powerfully engined boats can negotiate, and, although we had got safely through this mass of water, at twenty minutes past five in the morning, just as the first roseate tints of the coming dawn were causing the stars to pale, I was awakened by being thrown violently from my camp bed, my head striking the rail, giving rise to a momentary bewilderment.

Quickly pulling myself together, I saw that the large flat or barge alongside, owing probably to its drawing more water than the launch, had struck the hard bank with sufficient impact to cause some of the lashings to part, and had heeled over, at the same time making the launch heel in an opposite direction, the hulls of both boats in this way forming almost a right angle, and causing the water to pour into the launch on her starboard side and into the barge on her port side.

The weight of the water which so quickly found its way into the barge caused the remaining ropes to break, and the barge lay on her side almost completely submerged, but resting upon the sand-bank in about seven feet of water. The launch partly righted herself, but not sufficiently to get her starboard bulwarks from under the water, and one of the passengers drew my attention to the way in which the water was rushing into the engine-room, making me realize that the boat was doomed, so, finding my way to my trunks, I secured a few accessible valuables and my wallet ; placing them in the pockets of a pyjama suit with which I was clothed, I returned to the bow of the ship. The captain had ordered out the only small boat, so that a rope could be passed to shore to transport the invalids, women, and children, but it was no sooner launched than it was boarded by a number of soldiers, officers and men indiscriminately, who were completely panic-stricken and out of all control, thus swamping the only boat with which they would have abandoned, without the slightest compunction, their helpless companions.

Realizing that this was a case for individual decision, I, although a good swimmer, did not like the idea of swimming through the rushing whirlpools and undercurrents caused by the sunken barge, but there being no other alternative I jumped into the seething mass, calling upon others to follow me ; four of us struck the water in rapid succession, and a long thin line being passed to us, we swam with it to the sand-bank, and as a fairly strong rope was attached to its other end we had the satisfaction of knowing that at any rate the women and two small children had now a good chance of getting out of their dangerous predicament. While we held the rope sailors, aided by it, swam off to the bank, supporting first women and then children, then the helpless soldiers, and ultimately those who could not swim or were not strong enough to battle with the current. The passengers and crew were barely in comparative safety on the bank when the launch sank, remaining with only her funnel and masts above water. From the time she struck until she finally sank did not appear to cover more than six minutes, and not one out of more than a hundred souls was drowned.

During the excitement I had not thought about my baggage, but now had time to consider my plight. Not a scrap of food had come ashore; we had no other clothes but what we stood in; no matches, knives, firearms; in short, we were marooned on a sand-bank in the middle of the Amazon absolutely without resources, while I had lost effects, photos, curios, and documents, which had accompanied me for many years and were of priceless value to me, yet not a penny compensation did I receive, though the interested parties recovered insurance on cargo and boats.

Luckily there was plenty of wild cane on the bank, and we soon had two large shelters built to defend us from the rays of the burning sun and keep us fairly dry in case of rain; smaller ones were erected for the women and children and certain other individuals who had made themselves remarkably conspicuous by their excessive cowardice, a fact which they themselves seemed to realize, and for that reason had little desire to be with the main parties.

Although the captain called us all together, it was not possible for anyone to suggest any practical idea for our relief beyond the cutting of green shoots of the canes and a long rank grass which might serve to palliate the pangs of extreme hunger ; and in order not to be idle, and also so that I might not take my loss too much to heart, I called to my companion in misfortune, Gyp, and walked along the sand to dry my clothing, picking up on the way the eggs of a kind of gull which frequents the whole of the Amazon, locally known as "tibes" (pronounced "tee-bees"), and although they were small it was something that did not require cooking.

There were a great number of these birds upon the bank, and, when they rose, I tried knocking them down by throwing sticks at them, but remembering that there was no means of cooking I desisted.

I also discovered several nests containing half-fledged young ones. Taking two of the largest I could find, I took them to carry back to the camp, thinking my poor dog would eat them when hungry, but the sun by now having reached its zenith the heat of the soft sand burned my feet. Poor Gyp was in great pain through the heat on the pads of his feet and it was hard work to get the faithful beast to follow. When we arrived at the shelters I was worn out, and, knowing that there was no likelihood of my being called to dinner, I made an effort to seek oblivion in sleep, so scooping out a hollow in the sand and leaving a raised portion to serve me as a pillow I was soon in a sound sleep.

After having been asleep about two hours I was roused by the distant shouting of several soldiers who were dragging something from the water, and when it was brought up what was our disgust and disappointment to find that it was a case of "Old Tom" gin. Several expressed a desire to open it and broach the contents of the bottles, but our captain was a very wise man, and forbidding any drinking he ordered that it be placed in a part of the shelters which was reserved to him.

However, nothing more coming ashore that day, there was nothing else to do but satisfy one's hunger with cane shoots or young grass, and, placing some into my mouth, I fell asleep while chewing it, only to be awakened again at nightfall by swarms of mosquitoes, which, owing to our scanty clothing and bare heads and feet, preyed upon us almost at their will. At last, thoroughly exhausted, I retired some little distance from the party, where I found that the pests were not quite so abundant, and fell into a disturbed sleep until the morning.

On going down to the river to take a bath, I was assailed with the pangs of hunger, but was able to quell it by frequent and copious draughts of water from the river ; and so, during that second day on the sand-bank, my time was varied by trips to the river's edge for water and chewing grass nearly all day, with intervals of drowsiness during which perhaps I would sleep for some minutes, and such was the experience of the other members of the party.

My mental sufferings were augmented by the very evident privations which the women, children, and distressed invalids were undergoing, and the sadness of our party was made more acute by the deaths, late in the afternoon of this day, of two of the soldiers, without religious aid, prayers, or candles, and far from all those dear to them.

We had hardly buried them when we were lucky enough to recover from the river a small box, which contained twenty-four tins of a paste consisting of milk and chocolate, of which we were each given a little, and after eating the sickly stuff we washed it down with water.

We had struck the sand-bank on the morning of 5 October, and our condition remained unchanged until the afternoon of the fourth day, when on 8 October we sighted a launch coming up river which would inevitably pass close by us and see our plight.

When she got quite close we must have behaved like persons bereft of all reason, for we ran up and down the bank shouting, jumping, crying, waving all kinds of clothing, stopping only to embrace one another, so overjoyed were we at the prospects of relief.

The steamer finally dropped her anchor, a small boat was lowered and propelled rapidly to the bank, when our plight was soon made known to the occupant, who was, we found, the second officer.

The steamer turned out to be the *Elisa*, another Peruvian launch owned in Iquitos which had been loaned to the Government for the transportation of troops for the River Caqueta, sent to dislodge a Colombian expedition, and, a pitched battle having resulted, she was returning to Iquitos with all speed, carrying sick and wounded, and several important Colombian prisoners, among them being General Valencia, with whom in later days I made a firm friendship, as also with several of the members of his staff whom I met in Manaos some time after they had been released from Iquitos. Their post and Customs station were handed back, and satisfaction given by Peru for the outrages to the Colombian flag.

The second officer expressed his doubts as to whether the *Elisa* would be able to take us off the bank, and suggested that our captain should accompany him on board to inquire, which advice he acted upon, shortly afterwards returning with a supply of food and advising us that only the invalid troops would be taken off, and that the first steamer he met would be sent to our assistance.

We were bitterly disappointed, but it could not be otherwise arranged, so, helping with willing hands, we quickly had the invalids on board, and the steamer raising anchor and steaming away, we were soon appeasing the pangs of a few days' hunger with the ship's biscuits and tinned meats, but the most cheering of all was the fact that we could now have a fire, and, collecting driftwood, we made cocoa in plenty, the hot drink being very comforting, and to celebrate the occasion we broached the gin, and each had a good portion. Gyp got a good allowance of biscuit, and that night he was a new animal, running all over the bank in his satisfaction and canine content.

We remained on the sand-bank until the afternoon of the tenth of the same month, when we were rescued by the Brazilian river steamer *Hilda*, bound from Para to Iquitos, commanded by a kind-hearted and generous Brazilian gentleman, Captain Rabello Mendez.

As showing the character of this man, I will relate an incident of our transfer from the scene of our shipwreck to his steamer. Most of the passengers and crew having been taken on board, there remained only one more boat-load, of which I was one, and, upon my entering the already crowded boat, the sailors pushed off and would not allow my dog aboard; naturally this did not suit me, and not wishing to see my faithful friend disappear in the whirl of water—he was swimming after the boat—I jumped in again and returned to the sand-bank, inducing him to follow. Captain Mendez saw the occurrence, and, giving orders for a boat to be lowered, he had myself and dog placed on board in quick time.

I was very grateful to him for this humane act, and upon leaving the Brazils made him a present of this companion in many of my hardships, for the animal had taken a great liking to Captain Mendez, who much desired to possess him, and I always am assured that he is well cared for.

Once on board the steamer and *en voyage* for Iquitos, my first consideration was to procure a change of clothing, as the pyjamas in which I had left the launch showed effects of the ill-use to which they had been subjected while I was on the sand-bank, so I looked around to see if there was anyone on board to whom I might be known, and was more than delighted to find sitting in a chair the American doctor whom I had met upon my arrival at Encanto, and at his side, occupying a deck chair, none other than Sir Roger Casement, with a very pretty and affectionate blue macaw perched upon his shoulder. He was returning to Iquitos, and though both he and the doctor are very tall men, while I am barely five feet four inches in height, they placed themselves at once to some inconvenience to supply me with various articles of wearing apparel, as also did the captain and some of the officers.

Several days subsequently we arrived at Iquitos to find there was an epidemic of yellow fever, and on the day of our arrival three well-known local men were buried, including a young Manchester man, who had only been a short period in the country, and whose parents had made great sacrifices in building up a sound business for him, the hope and light of their declining years. Grief at his loss caused his father to follow him not very many months afterwards.

I presented myself at the offices of my late employers and explained my position, expressing a desire to interview the Iquitos manager, who was one of the directors, and even in this I was unfortunate, as he was in hiding, due to a warrant for his arrest having been issued in connection with his complicity in the atrocities perpetrated in the Putumayo which had been denounced to the British Foreign Office.

However, knowing the character of the Peruvian, I insisted, saying that I must see him regarding balance sheets and other documents which had been lost in the sinking of the steamer, and was then conducted to his residence within a stone's throw of the "Courts of Justice" (what a misnomer!), and remained with him for about an hour, being rewarded for my patience with a promise of a passage to Manaos by the steamer upon which I had arrived, where, he said, I would meet the senior member of the firm, who later on came to England to answer the charges made against him.

I asked to be furnished with articles of clothing from the store, a request which was refused, although I had served the firm for a lengthened period, but I was a hated "gringo," specially "marked" because of the labours and consequent disclosures of the British Commission of Inquiry. However, "needs must when the devil drives," and that same afternoon I left Iquitos on the *Hilda*, this time as a first-class passenger and not as a victim of shipwreck.

Thoroughly dispirited and sick in mind and body, I retired to the cabin which had been assigned to me, and was shortly suffering from a severe attack of fever. I was very fortunate to have as cabin companion a young Scotchman who was returning from Iquitos, where he had been representing the well-known firm of R . . . Co., Sheffield. This man showed me much kindness, even going so far as to assist me with necessary funds. He is another of the very few men to whom I am deeply grateful for practical help and moral support in times of great trial.

Upon arriving at Remate de Males, I crossed to the Peruvian town of Nazareth, to renew my acquaintance with it after several years' absence. I found very little appearance of advancement beyond the construction of two or three small wooden houses, but the trade appeared to have diminished in a very marked degree, and, bidding several old friends good-bye, I returned to the steamer, and the following day our journey was continued to Manaos.

This journey I have already described, but on this occasion I saw one thing that during the many years I had been travelling in the rivers I had never been able to witness before, and this time it was only by accident due to Captain Mendez inviting me to accompany him to pick out a lot of turtles which he desired to purchase from one of the commandants of a protected sand-bank.

We went ashore and first visited the rough hut of the tenant of the bank, or laying ground of the turtles, which frequent it in great numbers. The tenant rents it from the local government, and in return for the privilege of taking a certain number of turtles becomes responsible to the State for the protection of this valuable article of food and commerce.

We walked perhaps a mile over the burning sand to the corrals or large bamboo cages where the captured turtles were confined, and after picking out those that the captain desired the tenant asked us if we would like to see the "taboleiro," as the space in which the eggs are laid is called, and upon arriving there found the bank alive with turtles depositing their eggs.

There were thousands of them excavating the hollows in which to lay, throwing up spurts of sand with their fore flappers or webbed feet, furnished with claws that cut like knives.

We were enabled to go right up to them, even picking several up from the ground and carrying them a short distance away, in order to see them scurry back in their haste to be rid of their eggs.

I observed, too, that when the egg-laying operation is complete the female is most particular to smooth over with the hard under plate of her shell the sand which she has disturbed, and when the sun has dried it none but a very critical eye could distinguish the place.

These eggs, as I have already shown, are eaten either cooked or raw when new laid, and when they are matured and the young turtles are almost ready to scratch their way to the surface and thence to the river, great quantities are gathered in sacks or similar receptacles. They are placed in fresh clean water for a day or two, to rid them of any sand which might remain in their internal organs, when they are ready for the stew-pot, and when plentiful they are the excuse for much feasting.

When they reach the river they encounter many enemies, and, as the river begins to cover the banks where the young turtles are hatched, the surrounding waters teem with voracious fish, and even alligators that prey upon them before they can even reach the waters to which instinct leads them. Only a very small proportion of the number hatched arrive at maturity, as they rarely reach the inland lakes, where it is believed they remain until attaining sufficient size to protect themselves.

Continuing our voyage on to Manaos, we encountered a severe storm which caused us some delay, and we arrived at Manaos on 29 October, 1911. After a dinner given by the captain to celebrate the occasion, I, with the young Scotchman earlier referred to, went to our hotel, but not until we had all effusively promised to meet again at a café in the town next day.

Before Captain Mendez left Manaos I obtained from him the following certificate, which is in the Portuguese language:—

"Eu, abaixo assignado, Commandante do vapor Brazileiro *Hilda* certifico que O Sr. Joseph F. Woodroffe, de nacionalidade Inglez, foi uma das victimas do naufragio do vapor peruano *Asturiana*, na praia de Matachiro situada entre os logares denominados Maturá e Laranjal, no rio Solimões no dia 5 de Outubro de Mil novecientos e onze, e que foi posto a salvo pelo vapor do meu commando, no dia 10 do mesmo mez, junto com alguns passageiros e tripulantes do mesmo vapor naufrado, deixada pela Lancha *Elisa* tambem de bandeira peruana que por alli passou no dia 8 do referido mez, e que só poude recolher a seu bordo parte dos naufragos . . . e para todos os fines que lhe possam ser uteis este documento, assigno o em boa fé a bordo do vapor *Hilda* de meu commando, no dia 12 de Outubro do anno Mil novecentos e onze.

"(Signed) RABELLO MENDEZ,
"Commte."

The English translation is as follows:—

"I, the undersigned Commandant of the Brazilian steamer *Hilda*, certify that Mr. Joseph F. Woodroffe, of English nationality, was one of the victims of the sinking of the Peruvian steamer *Asturiana*, on the banks of Matachiro, situated between the places known as Matura and Laranjal, in the River Solimoes, on the 5th of October of the year one thousand nine hundred and eleven, and that he was placed in safety by the steamer under my command on the tenth day of the same month, along with some of the passengers and crew of the same sunken steamer, who were left on the bank by the s.s. *Elisa*, also under the Peruvian flag, which passed the spot on the eighth day of the month already referred to, and which could only take on board part of the survivors of the wrecked steamer, and for all means in which this document may be of use to him, I sign it in good faith on board the steamer *Hilda*, under my command, on the 12th day of October, of the year one thousand nine hundred and eleven.

" (Signed) RABELLO MENDEZ,
" Captain."

CHAPTER XIV

THE RIVER MADEIRA

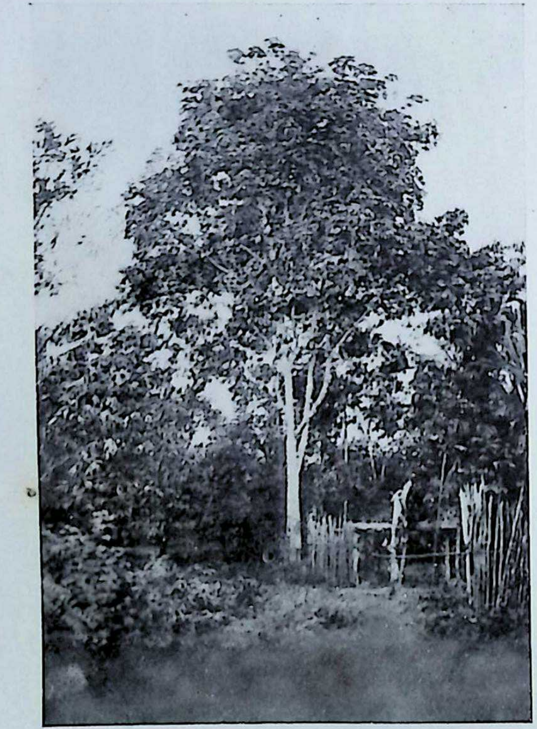
THE NEW RAILWAY

Departure from Manaos—Its history—The final attempt—Precautions and restrictions—A Bolivian trader—His methods—Merchandise—Mode of transportation—A waste of human life—Peonage, Porto Velho—Description—Life in general—A journey up the line.

SOME few days after my arrival at Manaos I again secured employment. This time it was not with a rubber firm, but with a railway company, which at the present time exploits the rubber forests along the line of its route. This starts from the Brazilian town of Santo Antonio, situated at the cataract of that name which from this point effectively bars navigation up the River Madeira.

From a place about three miles below the cataract the railway is now completed, and has been open to traffic for nearly two years to its terminus on the Brazilian frontier at a place known as Guajara Mirim, where there are two large cataracts known as Guajara Assu and Guajara Mirim.

This line was built under the terms of the Treaty of Petropolis, and made possible by the endeavours of that famous Brazilian statesman the Baron de Rio Branco. By it, in return for territorial concessions on the part of Bolivia,



A FINE RUBBER TREE (HEVEA BRAZILIENSIS)

COTTON-WOOD TREES AT PORTO VELHO

Brazil undertook the construction of a railway that would circumvent the difficulties of transport in the River Madeira, caused by the many cataracts and falls, and by doing this would give Bolivia an outlet to the Atlantic by way of the Amazon River.

The line was commenced in 1874, though the idea of constructing it had been considered and the capital subscribed long before this date; however, the insalubrity of the climate and the presence of Indians caused the early promoters of the scheme to abandon their attempts in favour of an American firm, which also soon relinquished their project.

Seven kilometres of the line were actually constructed in 1878, under the auspices of the Brazilian Government; an attempt was also made by an American firm of contractors, led by P. T. Collins, but this, too, was unsuccessful, owing to the ill-health of employees brought on by the deadly climate. The concession of the Brazilian Government was then withdrawn.

As in the case of the early workings of the Panama Canal, the contractors abandoned all their material, including an engine named "Colonel Church," which, after lying over thirty years in the bush, and a tree actually having grown through its smoke stack, is now running daily and doing good service. Abandoned rails have been utilized as telephone posts and electric-light standards, while in Santo Antonio they have been inverted and placed side by side to form a part of the public footpath.

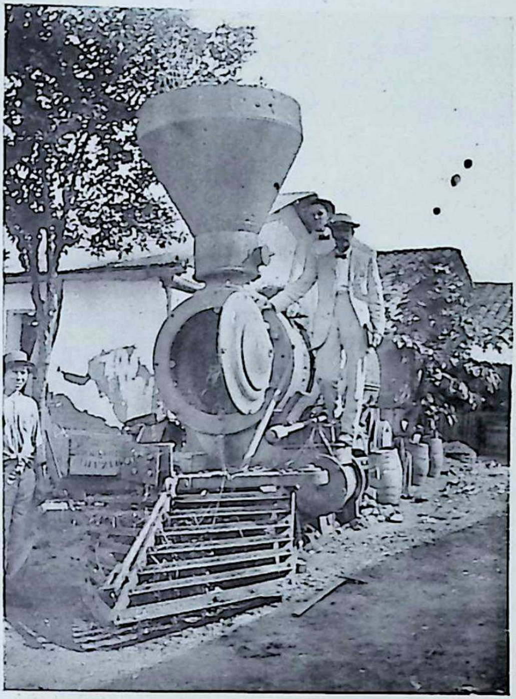
In 1882 another attempt at studying the practicability of the construction of the line was undertaken by a commission of Brazilian engineers, but in two months, thoroughly broken in health, they abandoned the district, and the same fate overtook subsequent attempts at the conquest of the deadly region. It was not until the above-mentioned Treaty of Petropolis, calling for more determined effort, that arrangements were made with American engineers, and in 1908 a company was formed with a capital of $11,000,000. Work was immediately commenced at the present starting-place of the railway, called "Porto Velho," meaning old port (old port for Santo Antonio).

This firm began work under the system which had been such a success at Panama, and has made possible the completion of this waterway.

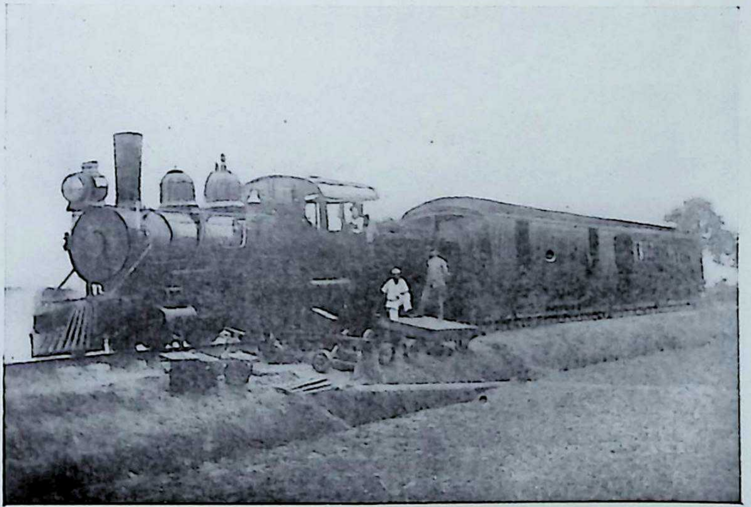
Great attention was paid to clearing the site of bush; houses were well built of wood and covered with mosquito netting; doctors and nurses were placed in charge of camps; strict discipline was the rule and was enforced; the presence of alcoholic liquor was prohibited, and the men were given none but the very best food obtainable. Notwithstanding all this care and caution, the deaths and loss of employees were so frequent, even before the men had been able to get to work, that the contractors began to feel that they must abandon everything as others had done before them.

Little by little the efforts of the self-sacrificing medical men were attended with some degree of success in their campaign against the unhealthy elements of this region, and sickness became less common as mosquitoes and other pests diminished, hastened by the use of enormous quantities of oil on stagnant water, and the care paid to sanitation, water, and the cleaning of the camps.

By 1910 there had been completed (at enormous cost of capital and human lives, which neither modern machinery nor the efforts of medical science could prevent) ninety kilometres of the line through the bush, as far as a point



THE ENGINE "COLONEL CHURCH" ABANDONED BY RAILWAY ENGINEERS IN 1880



THE SAME ENGINE AFTER 30 YEARS IN THE BUSH, RECONSTRUCTED BY THE MADEIRA MAMORÉ RY. CO., AND NOW DOING GOOD SERVICE

where a small river called the Jacy Parana was encountered, which necessitated the construction of a bridge and the formation of a large camp for the workers.

Here engineering difficulties were made much worse by the arrival of liquor vendors, chief among them a Bolivian Indian, who had been a peon and had worked as a boatman on the Madeira River.

This man settled down in a hut close to the bridge with a stock of cheap trade liquor, and also started a bakery, selling bread to the railway workers at one shilling and threepence the loaf of 200 grammes, or less than quarter of a pound avoirdupois. Although this gave him a large margin of profit, the huge fortune which he possesses to-day was derived from the sale of illicit spirits, and the soul of many a good honest man must lie to his account for settlement at the day of final judgment.

The constructors of the railway, with the help of the local authorities, did all in their power to counteract the evil influences of this man, but were powerless, owing to the superiority of the law of the .44, so common wherever one goes, and they were obliged to abandon the site, which had caused them an enormous outlay to clear and drain, in favour of a site distant about one kilometre. The Bolivian Indian remained in possession of a large tract of cleared ground, which had cost him nothing, and to which he quickly laid claim, by making application to the Government in an ordinary way. He also made application for the title deeds of the whole of the rubber-producing area of this river, but was not successful, because others had applied before him and had obtained the concessions, although they had neither worked the rubber nor occupied the river. This far-seeing and wily Bolivian saw this, and proceeded to open up the river and extract rubber, so that when possessors of the concessions for the rubber in the river came to occupy, they were opposed on the plea of "right by occupation." On the matter being referred to the courts in Manaos, "graft" won the day and the rightful owners were non-suited.

Our friend had now to find means of getting definite title deeds, and in order to do this he drew up articles of partnership with one of the principal officials of the State, whose only capital was to be an assurance that he would leave no stone unturned to use his influence to get possession of them. This he was able to do, and so great is the power of this official in the state that the erstwhile Indian peon is now a wealthy man; the proprietor of large rubber estates in the River Jacy Parana and district, and even directs the operations of a large rubber concession in which English, French, and American capital is employed.

He has only been out of the Amazon on one occasion, when he made a short trip to Rio, consequently he has had no beneficial contact with the outside world. This possibly accounts for his treatment of his workers. His seringal was the scene of the worst possible outrages that could be perpetrated upon human beings, two instances of which I made public shortly after my return to this country, and which were taken up by the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society.

Reverting once more to the railway company, another of their obstacles was the enormous cost of transport, which is even to-day one of the great factors in impeding the development of the Amazon, an even more effective impediment than "graft," which is one of the curses of the Amazon administration.

As I have already stated, the line is now completed as far as the Bolivian frontier, but the construction of the

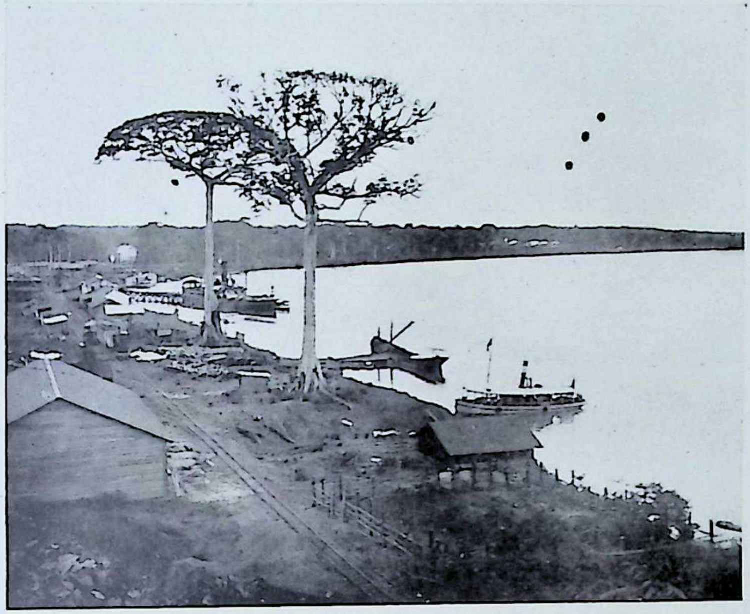
Bolivian portion proceeds very slowly, not because of climatic or engineering difficulties, but through impediments of a kind in which personal interests are not entirely absent. The sooner the line is completed the better it will be for commerce and industry, and for the suffering thousands of unenlightened souls in the immediate district; for where railways and other improved means of communication are established, more will become known of the country and its internal condition, and peonage will cease to exist with the arrival of intelligent white races.

Even to-day the benefits to the Indian races of this district have been very real ones. Before the completion of the line goods were carried from Santo Antonio to the upper reaches of the river and its affluents in canoes manned by Indian peons. Owing to the ravages of the climate and the treatment meted out to them by their owners and taskmasters during these awful and perilous journeys of months' duration, thousands of valuable lives were literally wasted, causing in this way a scarcity of Indian labour. The scarcity thus caused makes the condition of the present-day peons of the district much more arduous, and at the same time increases the endeavours of the contracting agents to secure fresh labour for the districts where it is required for the working of rubber and other agricultural pursuits.

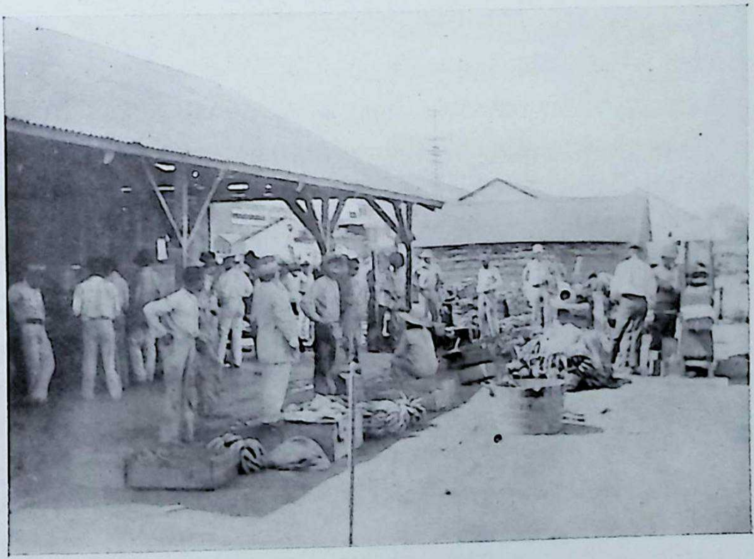
Many of the more important employers do make a pretence of paying their peons, and, fearful of what might some day be done in exposing them, keep records of such payments. But this is only a farce, as the Indian peon, when he receives any money, spends all in the shop of his patron in the purchase at exorbitant prices of those articles which, under an older system, were given to him, and in the purchase of liquor, perfumes, and fancy goods, which are imported and exhibited solely to excite his cupidity. As he has no idea of economy nor the value of money, he rarely reduces his debt, except in those cases where a particular portion of his debt is expunged from the firm's books. It is difficult to get in writing a truthful and clear account of value as proving the use of peonage or slavery in the firm's administration. Even in many cases where the peon is shown with a small debit balance, or even a small amount to his credit, he does not know but what he is owing a large amount.

Upon the construction of the Madeira Mamore railway peons were not used, but since the opening up and working of the rubber estates the system has been admitted, owing to the entrance of Peruvian, Bolivian, and other contractors with their own labourers. It is hardly to be expected that those in Porto Velho responsible for the management of the line should be able to supervise the working conditions of these men, but much good could be done by the employment of North Americans, or men of some other responsible race, in the internal administration of their rubber estates. Reforms are difficult to obtain wherever South American managers and overseers are in power.

The town of Porto Velho, from which the railway commences, is very finely built and well drained by a sewerage system constructed on the most modern lines. There is a good supply of water laid to every house, water from the river being pumped through one set of pipes for domestic purposes and through another set for drinking purposes. The drinking water is first boiled, then filtered and allowed to cool. It leaves the faucets after having run through a special ice-box, which ensures a continual supply of pure cold water, of which quite a lot is used, mostly early in the morning, to clear aching heads after the nights of drunken



PORTO VELHO. VIEW OF THE PORT FROM THE WIRELESS TELEGRAPH STATION



PORTO VELHO. A CORNER OF THE MARKET

debauchery and card parties common to almost everyone in the town. There is a large ice factory which supplies the offices with ice and also sells great quantities for public use.

The streets are regularly laid and plentifully planted with useful species of trees, while there are hotels, "cafés chantants," drinking and eating saloons, cinematograph shows, and other amusements.

There is a fine market, where one may buy almost any article of food which is to be had in the district at very reasonable prices.

The wharf, though small, consists of several pontoons, and affords a good loading and unloading berth for ocean-going steamers, and is furnished with powerful cranes and a car-way for hauling trucks up and down the banks from the stage, which is rarely idle owing to the frequency of river steamers.

There is a fine Marconi station which keeps one in touch with the outside world, all matters likely to be of general interest being posted daily on the bulletin boards of every house and suite of offices in the town, while the frequent arrival and departure of river steamers running between Manaos, Para, and this port ensure a regular mail service.

For those who like games there are billiards, tennis on fine courts of grass, cement, or mud, while there is a good pitch where exciting games of baseball are played on Sunday afternoons for the majority of the employees and administrative officers who hail from the United States of America.

Apart from all these advantages to be obtained in the most modern and perfect town in Brazil, there is a well-equipped hospital, where the best of medicines and American doctors are to be had, while careful nursing at the hands of American women goes far to ensure a certain and speedy recovery when one is fortunate enough to be there, instead of lying ill in some out-of-the-way rubber shack, depending upon one's constitution to be strong enough to withstand climatic and other diseases.

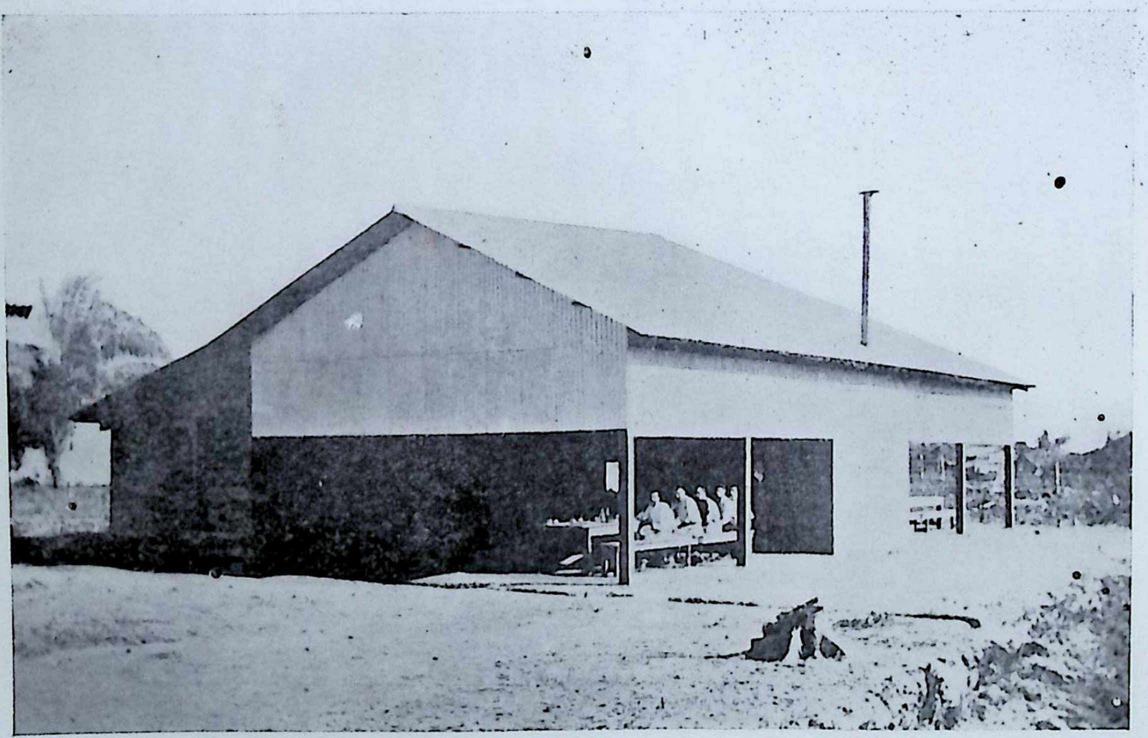
The machine-shops, engine-house, and rolling stock construction departments are generally admitted to rank among the best in South America, the machinery and automatic appliances being the best and most perfect of the day. The engines and rolling stock of the railway are also modern, and may be relied upon, being made by the foremost makers in the States; while the class of labour employed in these departments is maintained at a very high standard, though the same cannot be said of other departments.

There is a good telephone system, connecting shops and offices one with another, as also with any place on the length of the line, which is three hundred and sixty-four kilometres.

The working hours for mechanics are nine and a half, starting at 6 a.m. and finishing at 6 p.m., one half-hour being allowed for coffee and two hours for the midday meal and siesta. The men employed in offices work from 7.30 to 11.30 a.m., and from 1.30 to 5.30 p.m., making a day of only eight hours, but quite sufficient for any ordinary man in those regions.

In the evenings the employees make earnest endeavours to have what they call a good time, making up drinking or poker parties, where very high stakes are the rule, their "limit," as they put it, being the sky. Many a man, not excluding myself, has rued his visit to a card-party among the quick-fingered American experts.

I remained in Porto Velho until August, 1912, and was



"RESTAURANT" FOR PASSENGERS BY TRAIN AT VILLA MURTINHO

then obliged to absent myself some four months owing to a bad attack of malarial rheumatism, which necessitated my entering the hospital. The doctors told me that my sickness was due to the lengthened period during which I had been in the country, and advised my early removal. I was reluctantly compelled to agree, owing to strange yet serious misfortunes that had again found me out for their victim, and which it is unnecessary to detail. They were connected with a certain Englishman of French surname, who was always an opponent of my views, and of the manner in which I informed myself of the actual conditions of the country. His opinion was that the people were best left alone, as the evils which existed were necessary ones. There are many more Europeans who know conditions only superficially, and who never tire of expounding their views on the matter, but who are all of them interested in the exploitation of rubber, and defend present methods on the grounds of cheapness and consequent assured profits.

While with the railway company I made several trips along the line, sometimes for my own purpose and at others on the business of the company. I well remember one of the trips, due to peculiar circumstances concerning only myself, but which came under notice.

I had been unwell, and had entered the hospital at Candelaria. On returning to duty I was offered a trip up the line as a kind of holiday. Leaving by the train at about seven-thirty one morning, we were in a few moments at the town of Santo Antonio. After a short delay we continued our journey, following the tortuous route of the railway through the bush until we stopped at the station at Jacy Parana for passengers and to water the engine. About twenty minutes after leaving this place we arrived at

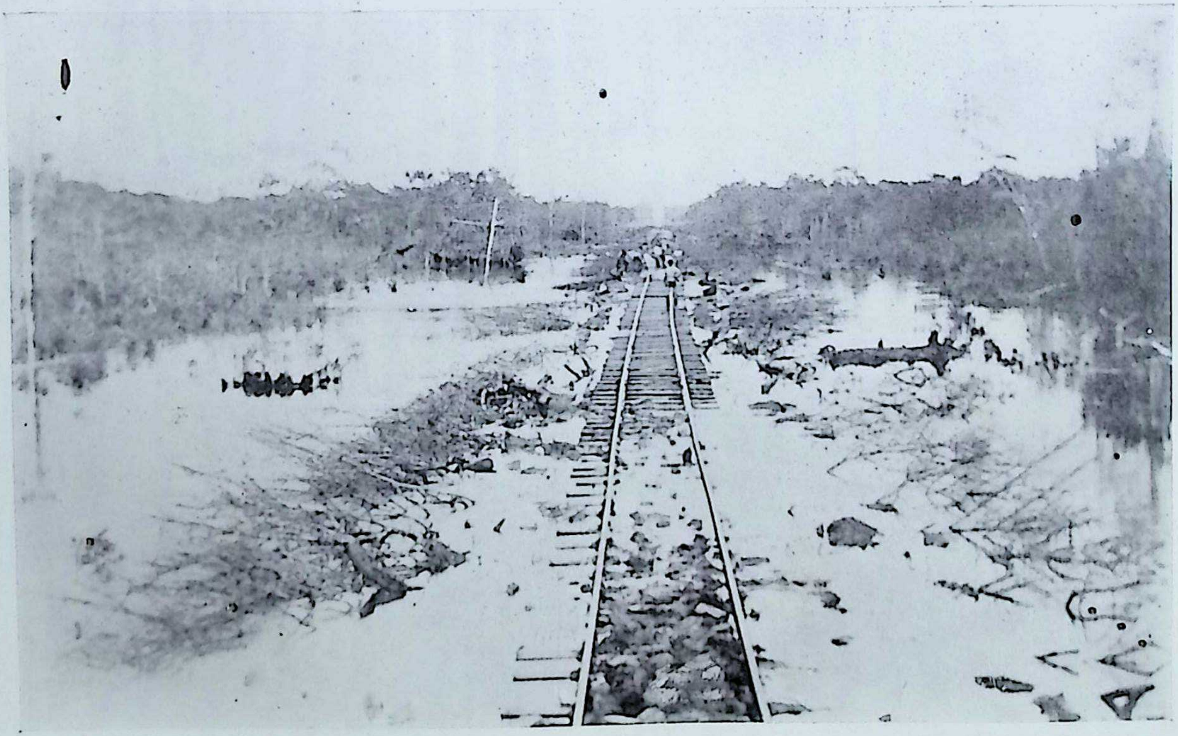
"Caldeirao" (pronounced Cal-de-ron), and had only traversed 112 kilometres since seven-thirty that morning, which cannot be considered an excessive rate of speed.

Here the train was delayed about forty minutes in order that the one travelling in an opposite direction could pass, and so that the passengers might take refreshments. A first-class meal costs 7s. 6d., while second-class passengers pay 3s. 9d. After all had refreshed the inner man and the oncoming train had safely passed, the journey was continued. The line is laid through a monotonous jungle, which had been our outlook all the way to Abuna, where the train remained the night. Here passengers who had the means obtained dinner, bed, and breakfast, very roughly served, and beds with used sheets and bedding, at a charge of about £1 net. Should liquor be required, the charge is found to be equally exorbitant.

Continuing the next day at about seven-thirty in the morning, the character of the country began to change a little, the long ascents of various steep hills bringing us to one of the highest points on the line, and the only place where there is any degree of picturesqueness. The track runs along the side of the river, where we obtained a good view of one of the cataracts of the Madeira called, I think, "Palo Grande," but I am not quite sure, as I cannot find its name in my notes.

From this point the line gradually drops again until reaching a large low-lying swampy district, where the line was constructed at the cost of many lives, for the workers were occupied in carrying the metals over forty-five kilometres of swamp, many times with the greater portion of their bodies in water and exposed to the pitiless rays of the tropical sun.

Before the trains could run over this place countless tons



DIFFICULTIES OF RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION—RUNNING THE METALS THROUGH SWAMP ON CUT BRUSH FILLED UP WITH EARTH

of earth had to be dumped on rough mats of scrub, forming a kind of raised bank or bridge, forty-five kilometres in length in an almost straight line.

We soon arrived at Villa Murtinho, and here again we stopped for the midday meal, which was partaken of under the same rough conditions prevailing at our stop the previous day, the prices being slightly in excess of those in vogue lower down the line.

In front of this town or village of Villa Murtinho, which is situated at the junction of the rivers Madeira and Beni (but on the Brazilian side), is to be found, on the opposite bank, the Bolivian village of Villa Bella, now partly abandoned since the construction of the railway, which rendered unnecessary the carrying of rubber and merchandise in canoes, and thereby automatically rendering unprofitable the trade of the Bolivian transport agents, who have now abandoned the site, taking with them their " personnels " in the form of peons. They are now occupied in rubber gathering and in agricultural pursuits, where they are less likely to come under the eye of the visiting stranger, who rarely, if ever, penetrates to the rubber jungles where these men and their families wear out their lives.

Leaving Villa Murtinho about noon, we arrived, after a run of less than four hours, at Guajara Mirim, the terminus of the railway in Brazilian territory. Here we found a jumble of roughly built houses, consisting of a restaurant or two, some drinking dens, and the residences of some small traders who make a living out of the sale and running of contraband goods and of rubber bought secretly from the Bolivian side.

Staying only the one night at this place, I returned by train the following day to Porto Velho, perhaps as bad in health or worse than when I had left, due to the shaking received while travelling over the rough track. I remained at my duties until my health completely broke down, and I was obliged to take a short holiday. I left Porto Velho on 5 July, 1912, and returned in the month of October of the same year, after an absence of just over three months.

CHAPTER XV

THE RIVER MADEIRA (*Continued*)

RUBBER EXTRACTION

A Bolivian and his methods—Instances—Caripuna Indians—An unfortunate Indian—Departure for Bolivia—Villa Bella—Peonage and its effects—A warning—An atrocious outrage—White men as slaves—Up the River Beni—A Bolivian establishment—Description—Peculiar customs—Englishmen—Treatment—What peonage is—Instances—British Consuls—Englishmen's funerals—Arrival at Riberalta—Description—Japanese immigrants—Local government—An appeal to the nation—Return to England.

ON my way back to Porto Velho to resume my duties with the railway company I made the acquaintance of the Bolivian trader referred to in a previous chapter, who was a fellow-passenger on the river steamer from Manaos, and with whom I got into conversation.

He made advances to me which, with my knowledge of the country and its people, seemed favourable. On a verbal understanding with him that I should examine his books and bring them up to date with a view to a report and balance-sheet being prepared to help in the floating of his property as a limited company, with capital subscribed in Europe, I gave up my position with the railway company.

It must be borne in mind that I thought I was dealing with an honourable, straightforward man, as he was greatly respected by the high officials of the company, and was continually in their society and that of certain high Brazilian authorities, who frequently visited him at his shack at Jacy Parana. I little imagined that I should soon have reason to regret my connection with him.

Handing in my resignation to the general manager of the railway, with whom I had had certain disagreements, due to the wily dishonesty of some Brazilian employees, I took a train to the Bolivian's camp at Kilometre 88, and got my first introduction to his place, named by him and known as "As Pedras," which in English means "The Rocks," there being a cataract just at the foot of the bridge.

I had expected to find a home, or at least some evidence that the house was the residence of an important and wealthy rubber proprietor. What I did find was an incomplete wooden barrack containing three rooms, one of which was used by him as a bedroom, living-room, and private office combined. Another small place was used as a dining-room, and the third was a kind of office where such books and accounts as existed were strewn about without any attempt at order, and often were trampled upon by the clients and sub-contractors who were in this fiend's grip. He made their lives unbearable when continual and noisy claims regarding the administration of the estate were made. When it was necessary to refer to transactions blows were often given and as readily taken, for this proprietor had kept no accounts for over four years, and thus he was secure in the knowledge that his claims would be preferred in the local courts. Moreover, he could rely on the influence of his "official" partner.

This man knew that attempts were likely to be made upon his life, and was therefore constantly armed, never permitting the approach of a third party unless his hand went to his pocket, where he could find some comfort and courage by the grip of his hand on an automatic pistol.

The conditions at this seringal and in the centres of rubber production I believe to be worse than any other in Brazilian territory, and am convinced of this by an exhaustive examination of the correspondence relating thereto, and other information acquired from his apologies for accounts. Yet this man could, with the help of certain influential friends, make up a report purporting to show the value of his business and demonstrating his ability as an administrator. Although he cannot speak a word of Spanish or Portuguese, but uses a mixture of both, this charlatan obtained the contract for the administration of a rubber estate which is the largest in the district, and which is operated mainly by American and English capital. It must in fairness be placed on record that the directors of the company do not know the class of man in charge of their interests, but their representative in Brazil, a German Brazilian, did and does know most of the facts.

It is in the power of men like these that one has to live in order to gain a comprehensive knowledge of the country, its customs, and conditions, and yet this very fact is often quite enough to cause one on many occasions to be discredited. I remained at this place for about four months, when, thoroughly sick at heart by all I saw there, I applied for the balance of salary due to me. Delay seeming probable, and fearing for my life, owing to having been indiscreet enough to express myself very forcibly, I took an early opportunity of abandoning this hell on earth without receiving any remuneration for my services. Repeated demands have all been futile, though I have in my possession an account demonstrating the amount of money due to me.

I had, however, gained something, for I had got a clearer understanding of the workings of the system under which the wild rubber of South America is produced and sent in English ships to furnish the million and one comforts which rubber provides for us; and it was about this time that a vague notion of writing a book, delineating honestly and faithfully these conditions, began to take definite shape. But I was not yet satisfied that I had seen all, so after abandoning the Jacy Parana I took train to a point higher up the line, called Mutum Parana, which is also the name of a small river where is to be found a village of Caripuna Indians. I was not able to get a canoe to take me up the river to visit them. I had, however, on several occasions seen and spoken to one of this tribe, who had been found close to the line in a very shocking condition, due, it is said by some, to an ulcerous growth on one of his legs. Accounts respecting his disease do not agree, but be that as it may, this savage was taken to hospital and an operation performed upon him which saved his life at the cost of the greater part of his limb. He was soon hobbling around on a wooden stump, and shortly returned to his tribe, only, in later days, to have the misfortune to be bitten by a snake, and upon his again being treated at the hospital it was found necessary to amputate the remaining leg.

He is still to be seen about the hospital, trying to help in any way possible in the daily duties and labours of the assistants, and now speaks about sufficient English to make himself understood. It does one good to see his countenance break into a happy smile when one greets him with "Hello, Pitt," a name given to him by the American doctors and the staff of the hospital.

After leaving Mutum Parana, I went to the village of Abuna and crossed the Bolivian river of this name, in order to interview the representative of a French rubber exploitation and trading concern which operates in this river, and about which I had heard much comment. Not finding the person I wished to see, I returned to the Brazilian side of the river, and thence to Villa Murtinho by train.

There being nothing beyond a few station buildings at this place, I joined the company of a well-known Ceara horse and cattle breeder, who was going to see the "Delegado" Coronel Arauz, respecting the importation of Brazilian horses in place of those from the Argentine, which rarely, it is said, are fit for service more than a year, because of a microbic disease which sets up a kind of paralysis in the animals from the withers, causing them to drag their hind legs and gradually incapacitating them, when they fall to the ground and die, either from the effects of hunger or the disease.

While in Villa Bella, a period of eight days, waiting for a launch to take us to Riberalta, this Brazilian gentleman and I stayed at an hotel owned by a very intelligent Bolivian, a native of La Paz, who had been many years in Villa Bella, in fact, he had been there from its inception, in the days when cargo was all carried by water in large boats manned by the Indians, crossing the falls of Misericordia, Ribeiroã, Periquitos, Araras, Pederneira, Paredão, Tres Irmaos, Girão, etc.

My friend Don Francisco Parente and I commented upon the evident difference everywhere apparent in the town, between the life here and on the Brazilian side, a conversation which was overheard by our host, who, becoming interested, asked to be allowed to join us, to which we readily assented.

He was a man who had suffered much in opposing public opinion and local treatment of the peons, having the discernment to recognize that the country's supply of labour was being surely and quickly destroyed.[1] He was not afraid to voice his ideas, and he had thereby incurred the anger of his neighbours and of the authorities to such an extent that he had on more than one occasion been thrust into gaol and beaten.

He had a tale to tell of the barbarities committed upon the persons of the unwilling peons that made my blood run cold. He was particularly bitter in his sapient remarks on the part played by European capital and European intelligence in the covering up of nameless and numberless crimes committed in this district. He indicated to me (upon declaring my interest in convincing myself of all this) the best manner of acquiring the information I so much desired, impressing upon me that further up river simulated offers of friendship would be made to me to find out my general ideas of life in the district, in order that the interested parties could assure themselves that I meant no harm to them. This is a fear which is ever present with nearly all employers of labour in the Bolivian rivers. I make this general assertion, as it is not possible for me to specify names, dates, and places, as is the case with regard to my references to the Putumayo, until such time as this district is visited by an English commission of inquiry and my statements in general vindicated.

In Villa Bella, at a house only a few doors from my hotel, a girl was engaged by an elderly woman to sell from door to door daily trays of small sweet cakes, a pretence to cover a systematic exploitation of this girl's immoral earnings. She was rather prettier than the general run of girls engaged in this business and, unlike the others, was more successful in the sale of her cakes; but on this particular afternoon she had remained with a visitor to the town, another Bolivian, who had, after wasting her time, refused to purchase her cakes, and consequently she was obliged to depart from her usual practice, and returned with her cakes unsold.

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[1] Dr. Felipe Antelo, the Administrator of Customs, placing the number at 40,000.

This was sufficient to send the old virago into an ungovernable fury, and, dragging the girl into an open space behind our hotel, for over half an hour pulled the poor child by the hair, spat upon her, kicked her and beat her with a club until she was a mass of bleeding wounds, accompanying the punishment with the vilest expressions possible in the Spanish and Aymara languages.

My Brazilian friend and I greatly desired to interfere in this girl's chastisement, but were prevented from doing so at the earnest request of our host, who feared the consequences, as he said the local opinion was that there was no other way of treating a peon, male or female, but by the plentiful use of the scourge.

He quoted instances of decent white men from the principal cities, such as La Paz, Cochabamba, etc., who had come into the region bringing with them their wives and children, who, as employees, had got into debt with houses and firms in the district and, unable to withstand the climate and other unfavourable conditions, had succumbed in debt. In these cases the machinery of the law had been brought into use, by the process of " graft," to compel the wife and children to hire themselves out to their husband's creditors and work to pay off debts not of their making. This, I later found, is one of the systems of the country, and calls for early measures for its abolition.

By the time these lines are in print many implicated firms will have taken hasty means to brighten tarnished spots, but the evil cannot in a moment be hidden from view, and anyone really in search of definite information cannot fail to become convinced by spending only a few days, not with influential managers, agents, and the like, but in a quiet way among the people, listening to their conversations and where necessary persuading them to open their hearts and minds.

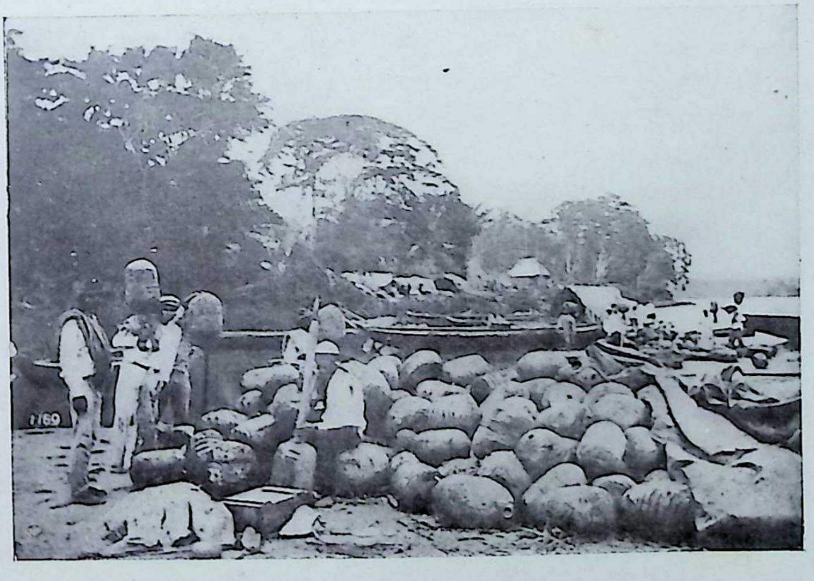
Slavery, shame, and vice are the sum of all that my Brazilian friend and I found in this Bolivian frontier town, less than a mile from a newly built railroad, and I know that if these lines meet the eye of my companion he will remember our compact to do all in our power to make these things public knowledge, if need be the whole world through, and I am content to know that I at least have fulfilled my promise irrespective of any measures taken by him in his native town of Ceara, on the South Atlantic coast of Brazil.

From Villa Bella we ascended the Rio Beni, first taking passage in a small motor-boat that had three large barges in tow behind her laden with merchandise for the first fall, called " Cachuela Esperanza," where a wealthy and well-known English rubber house has a large establishment.

Owing to the falls or rapids, which are about a mile long, further navigation is impossible without making a detour by land to join another river steamer above the cataracts, and all cargo and luggage is carried round on a small Decauville line from the motors and boats, which bring merchandise from the railway line to the steamers that navigate the upper reaches.

Upon arrival one is struck by the decent appearance of the place, and the first building one encounters is a pretty little bungalow with a memorial shaft directly facing, fenced around with palings ; the space railed off containing very charming shrubs and flowers, but a short time on the spot convinces one of its insanitary and unhealthy condition.

CATARACTS ON THE RIVER MADEIRA



RIVER MADEIRA—A PORTAGE, FINE RUBBER BEING TRANSPORTED IN CANOES

Bones and skulls of cattle lie around the grounds, left where the beasts have been killed for food, and fill the air with odours of their putrefaction, while half-starved, wild-eyed dogs, belonging to the peons engaged here, rush at strangers in a most objectionable manner.

There is also a kind of creek or overflow from the floods, called by the local people a "curiche," which aids the decomposing animal matter to pollute the atmosphere as it steams from the heat of the burning sun. But this does not seem to affect the inhabitants, who sometimes bathe in its waters. The people with whom one comes in contact in the region, unless they are Europeans or Indians, rarely bathe, due probably to the fact that they are natives of the icy cold Andean villages, who, as is well known, do not cleanse their bodies.

The Indian labourers here seemed a miserable set of beings, very different from the sturdy Quechuas one sees in other parts. They were dirty, lazy, and ignorant. I asked one to carry my baggage to the steamer, but he looked at me when I offered him money in payment as though I were a rarity, and without a word he turned away, owing, no doubt, to the fact that they are so accustomed only to obey their taskmasters, a fact which has caused great annoyance to travellers in the country, as bearers cannot be obtained unless one pays their debt to their masters.

Here I encountered a custom which I had not seen since leaving Peru; men and women divesting themselves of their clothing and bathing together in the water absolutely nude, the women only having some sense of shame; for their habit was, if observed, to take up a sitting or squatting posture on the side of the bank when bathing, and of re-clothing themselves without drying their bodies. But the men had no shame whatever. If bath-houses had existed, as among the Brazilians, I doubt if they would have used them, for it does not appear to be the custom, either in Villa Bella or Riberalta, to construct bathrooms, and the same remark applies to other places which I visited in the neighbourhood.

The houses of all except the managers and some employees of a superior category were the common cane huts which one finds in all the river villages inhabited by Indians. In accommodation of this class with dirty mud floors, in which jiggers and other vermin were frequent, I have found Englishmen living two and three in a room, with no furniture beyond a dirty deal table and some chairs.

Some of them I have talked to, and bitter were their complaints at having been induced to leave their homes on the understanding that they would be well treated, only to find themselves abandoned and treated no better than the inferior native employees and peons. Broken, sad, and absolutely without hope; with poor food, and obliged to send the greater part of their earnings to Europe to support their families, these men are compelled to spend what little money remains in the purchase of necessary food to keep body and soul together. So exorbitant are the charges for all that one needs to buy that they are even obliged to wash their own clothes, patch and mend them, for it is impossible to buy new ones without getting heavily in debt. In the case of thoughtless men, the wickedness of the system is clear, for they purchase the goods displayed by their wily employers, to whose benefit it is that they buy as much as possible. The employer, in fact, tempts them in every way, by offering them facilities to buy none but his goods, as he thereby makes an exorbitant profit, and in a short time, when he thinks he has got his confiding employee in such a position that he cannot pay unless by many months of the greatest self-denial, the want of consideration and ill-treatment commence. The man, whatever his nationality may be, is now a peon, and as such, systematically exploited, and obliged to do according to his master's will, without any hope of redress. Nor can he leave the country, for he has not the means to pay his way out, and even were he able he would be pursued and, if caught, as is generally the case, would be obliged to continue working, more heavily in debt than ever, due to the expenses incurred in capturing him.

He cannot, with any hope of success, look for another situation, for no one cares to accept the responsibility nor pay the debt of a white man which has resulted in its making a profit to another man, and which they would not be likely to receive in the future, as the victim would be as economical as possible in order to get his liberty at an early date. They prefer to get men not in debt and then make them debtors to their own profit.

I know of European houses who advance, what are in England for working men, large sums of money for travelling expenses, to be deducted from their salaries upon their arrival, but the passage out occupies two and three months, and upon their arrival they find that the money is quite insufficient to meet their most ordinary requirements.

I have in front of me as I write the current account of a marine engineer engaged by an English house, whose members are not Englishmen, who, under the terms of his agreement, was to receive the sum of £20 paid in advance in lieu of salary during the time occupied in travelling to his destination; but, in his first account current he is "debited" with this amount, plus £10 for purchases from the firm's store, made on his arrival in South America. These consisted of a small filter, mosquito net, a large filter, a bucket, a hammock, a bed-spread, four sticks for a mosquito net, and rope for the hammock, for the latter item being charged 2s. 6d. It is perfectly clear that large profits are made, when these articles could have been bought in England for a trivial sum. But this is not all. When the man had made sundry other purchases he was owing to the firm £46 sterling, and he had not yet commenced his journey across country almost to the Andes, a trip of six weeks under very favourable conditions; nor had he been debited with his hotel bill of over £1 per day, while waiting for the river steamer in Para. This man almost from the beginning was in a hopeless situation; and so it is with most of them.

The only British Consuls in the Amazon are at Para and Manaos in Brazil, Iquitos in Peru, while in Bolivia they can only be found at La Paz and Oruro. What is a man to do who is in this situation in the rubber plantations in the higher reaches of the Amazon, Acre, Purus, Jurua, Ucayali, Madre de Dios, Beni, or Mamore, where in many cases there are not even local authorities at lesser distances than some hundred miles? And even if there were, under existing laws, what can a Consul do beyond assisting the victim with a little pocket money, temporary shelter, and food?

It is a common idea in England that a Consul is obliged to attend upon every tropical tramp or British subject who requires money, but the writer knows to his cost that this is not so.

Due to the circumstances above described, several tragedies have resulted. One young Englishman, owing to no one being placed to watch him (not even an Indian boy) in the height of the delirium caused by fever, drank six ounces of pure alcohol, and very naturally he died in a few hours;

yet when his parents demanded particulars of his death, as they were not satisfied, the managers in South America wrote back to say that the lad's death had been accelerated by his own carelessness, and that he had died from the excessive use of alcohol. Another, in the height of delirium and abandoned in a hut, threw himself into a river and was drowned; and yet a third, who had been many years a soldier in India, serving with the British Army, became so disgusted with the food that his stomach refused to take it. Unable to buy other food-stuffs, as he required all available salary to wipe out his debt incurred in going out to South America three months previously, or let his family suffer, he gradually became thinner and weaker, and falling into a decline died within a very short space of time. Two of these men were buried in coffins, without religious ceremony of any description. Another was interred in a public cemetery wrapped only in a hammock, for which his widow had to pay 40 bolivians (£3 5s.), and 120 bolivians for the bed in which he died; these deductions were made in spite of the fact that the net result of this Englishman's balance was less than £40 after three years and five months continuous service with his employers in South America.

Another factor which greatly aggravates the condition of men taken out under misrepresentation is the practice of crediting them in their accounts at the rate of twelve bolivians to the pound (a bolivian being twenty pence), but all the moneys they draw in the country are charged to them as twelve bolivians and fifty cents, which at the rate of their pay is equal to charging them twenty-one shillings for each pound sterling, a profit to the companies of £5 per cent on salaries of employees.

If this is done with high-grade employees who can read and write, yet are not conversant with this little manipulation of figures, what must be the result in the accounts of the peons and illiterate persons?

These facts are taken from the accounts of only one or two men out of many, and yet men can be found with ease to go out to South American countries only because these things are not known in England.

While on my way out in 1905 I met on board the ship a young Liverpool mechanic who was going to Bolivia. This was long before the construction of the railway, and this young Englishman had to place his life in jeopardy by making the very dangerous voyage up the Madeira in canoe, traversing its terrible falls and rapids. He was five months upon the way before he arrived at his journey's end, and while I was in the district I met him again, after eight years, and found him helping in the construction of a small river boat. I visited him in his house, expecting that after eight years he would have a decent shack, but I found him living with an old Indian woman in a room with no furniture beyond two chairs, a table, and a hammock, with three or four brown-skinned naked urchins running around, of whom he was the father. He informed me that, though he ate the humble fare of the Indian peons, which consists mostly of dried beef and banana, called "mascato," he was in debt, indeed always had been, and did not now much care if he always would be. These are our own countrymen, British subjects, and in the power of a so-called English company.

Rubber has not only to answer for crimes and atrocities perpetrated upon long-suffering aborigines, but for injustices such as these, which make our countrymen, and other Europeans, slaves in every sense to masters, to passion, but above all to "Red Rubber," stained by the blood of countless thousands of God's creatures.

After leaving this district, my friend and I visited the town of Riberalta, the principal one in these parts of Bolivia. It is situated on the right bank of the River Beni facing the mouth of the Madre de Dios. I remained there about two months, my friend and companion for the duration of our voyage leaving me in order that he could return to Ceara, his business with the Delegado not having been very successful.

Riberalta is a town of some six to eight thousand inhabitants, built on high ground, and is well planned. Its streets are wide and straight, but are not paved. The footpaths are made by building out the eaves of the houses for about four feet, which causes the passers-by to walk under their grateful shade, and the continual tread of bare feet forms a worn, hard clay path, on which no grass will grow even if it were given time. The centre of the less frequented roads is good green turf, but the main streets are in dry weather full of deep dry ruts caused by bullock-carts, while after heavy rains they are quagmires of mud, and one is often when desiring to cross from one side of the road to the other obliged to walk a long way to find a spot which can be passed without the mud reaching the ankles.

There are no drainage or sanitary works here beyond the pigs, which a friend of mine often called "sanitary inspectors," a rather good name for them. There are one good hotel and two indifferent ones, and the inevitable priest and the church, which only the women attend, much to the annoyance of the male members of the community.

There are two cinematograph shows, which are produced in the open, and to see which one pays about six shillings for the cheapest seats. They are very inferior, but obtain good crowds of cholos and the élite of the town.

There are several open spaces, or plazas, one railed in and in which a few shrubs and flowers are grown. This is called the "Parque Ingles," or English Park, and contains a bandstand, which was only waiting for a strong wind to come along and blow it over. The others are used as grazing grounds by the local butcher, who has the concession for the sale of the half-dead beasts which provide the populace with fresh beef, and which even now causes me to shudder when I find it on the table. In no other district in the world would such cattle be allowed to be killed for human food, and I am sure that a great percentage of those that die before the butcher can reach them with his pole-axe do so from the tick-fever that is so prevalent in Bolivia, particularly in the districts around Villa Bella and Riberalta.

While in Riberalta, too, I had every opportunity of comparing the effects of the peonage system with the labours of a large colony of Japanese who come into the district in small bodies as they abandon the colony of the Peruvian Corporation at Chanchamayo.

The Japanese in Riberalta, and in their small farms and colonies which they have founded along the banks of the Beni, are sober, serious, clean, and in every way desirable persons. They provide the town with fresh fish, vegetables of every kind, rice, beans, bananas, tobacco, and other crops which before their arrival were non-existent, as the peons were not employed in this kind of agricultural labour.

They have established themselves in the town as carpenters, smiths, labourers, barbers, grocers, and many of them have contracted themselves as rubber gatherers, in fact, were they present in large numbers they would, I think, do much to help in the solution of the labour problem in the district, and consequently peonage, with its various forms of slavery, would cease.

When the railway is constructed there should be a great commercial future for the town, if healthy competition were introduced, but at present there is little scope for the enterprising small industrial capitalist, owing to the power of one or two wealthy firms who have a monopoly of the district and, in fact, wield more power than the national Government.

The department is under the control of an official called "El Delegado de Colonias" (Colonial Delegate), who is selected for short terms by the National Assembly, reports direct to his Government, and drafts necessary new laws, which are submitted only for legalization.

He is responsible for the good government of the department, but the remuneration allowed him is quite insufficient to keep him outside the bane of "graft," and the rubber proprietors, who are practically the local government, owing to their huge interests, can generally manage to have matters arranged to suit themselves at not very great expense, as was the case with the Putumayo and a Peruvian official.

A very promising man who was delegate, but who is now a large planter of sugar and distiller of alcohol, made a report to the Minister of War and Agriculture recommending, among others, that the following measures of protection be taken to help in the improving of the region, which "data venia" I have abstracted from Chapter VIII, and is as follows :—

"1. Abaratar por todos los medios el costo de la vida, proporcionando al trabajador gomero los recursos de subsistencia en condiciones cada dia mas ventajosas, para que el costo de produccion vaya en proporcion directa con la baja de la goma.

"2. Rebajar los impuestos de importacion de los articulos de primera necesidad, ya sean alimentacios ó de utiles y herramientos destinadas á la industria de la goma.

"3. Subvencionar companias de navegación para hacerlas fijar una baja tarifa de fletes, y gestionar ante el Brazil, que disminuya los exorbitantes precios del Madeira Mamoré.

"4. Dictar una ley de protección indigena que salve á nuestro Indio, victima de malos tratos que le hace agotar sus fuerzas y morir muy joven, ó tener que emigrar á la banda Brazileña donde lleva su paciente trabajo que nosotros tanto necessitamos.

"5. Dictar leyes que tienden á reconquistar nuestras tierras entregadas á manos muertas, lo cual se conseguiria con el procedimento indirecto de los impuestos, á que me refiro en el capitulo correspondiente, etc., etc."

The English translation reads :—

"1. Cheapen by every means the cost of living, allowing the rubber worker the means of subsistence under conditions every day more advantageous, so that the cost of production go in direct proportion with the fall in prices of rubber.

"2. Reduce the import duties on articles of first necessity, whether food-stuffs or tools and implements destined to be used in the rubber industry.

"3. Subsidize navigation companies to make them adopt low freight rates, and to raise the question with Brazil that the exorbitant prices of the Madeira Mamore Railway be reduced.

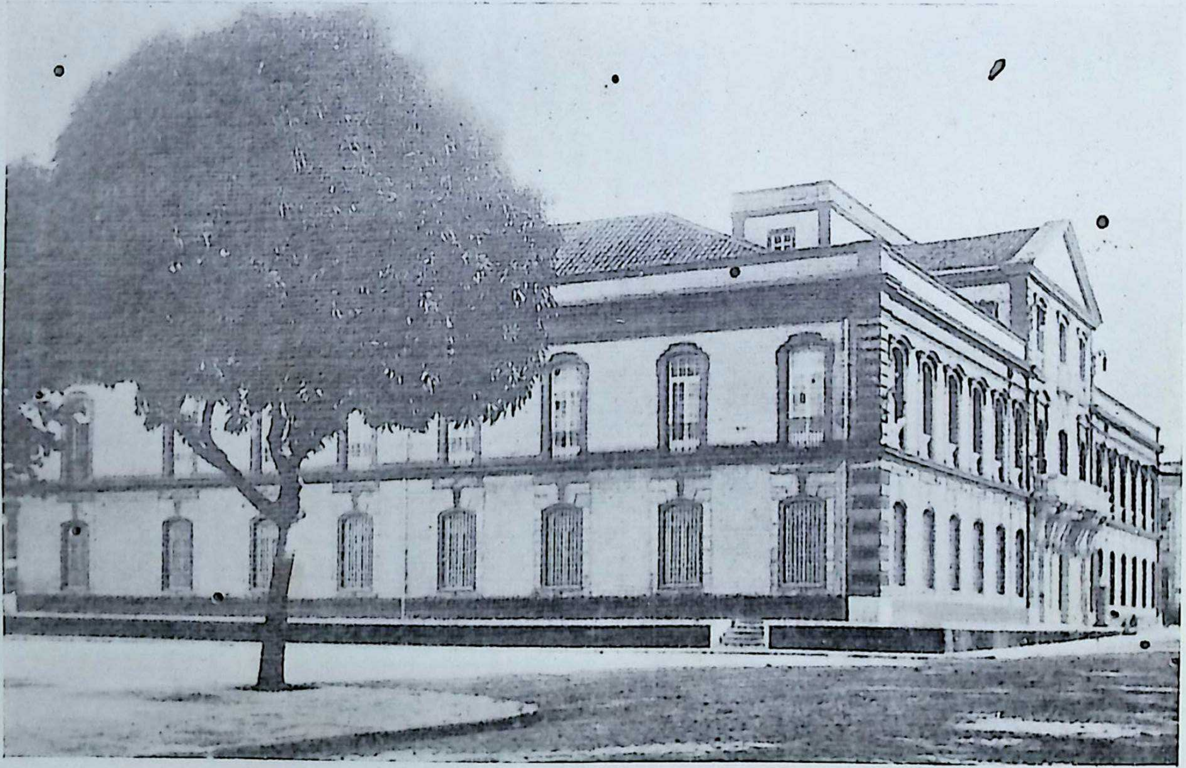
"4. Dictate a law for the protection of the aborigines which would save our Indian victim from ill-treatment and from a simulated slavery which makes him give all his forces and to die very young or emigrate to the Brazilian boundary, taking his patient labours which we so greatly need.

"5. Dictate laws which would tend to retake by force our lands in the hands of those who do not exploit or improve them, which would be done with the proceeding of indirect taxation to which I refer in its corresponding chapter, etc."

Paragraph four of this report should be sufficient confirmation for any responsible person that conditions existing in the rubber producing districts of the rivers Beni, Mamore, and Madre de Dios, to which this report by a Bolivian head officer of State refers, must have been something much more cruel than the peonage system as it exists in other parts of Bolivia less remote from civilization.

I remained in this district several months before definitely abandoning the region. Leaving Riberalta at the end of June, I made my way by easy stages to Porto Velho, when, having concluded all my business arrangements, I embarked on a Brazilian river steamer to Para, at which place I arrived after an uneventful journey occupying eight days. After a few days in Para waiting for a steamer to carry me to England, I took my passage by the s.s. *Antony* of the Booth Steamship Company and, after an exceedingly pleasant voyage, arrived at Liverpool on 20 September, 1913, after an absence of exactly seven years and eleven months.

Safely at home and among parents and friends I felt, and am convinced, that there is no place that can equal home and the old country, and yet even while I wonder that it was ever possible to spend such a period as I had spent in the Amazonian forests, I have a certain amount of self-satisfaction in the possession of the knowledge acquired which effectively dispels regret.



THE GOVERNOR'S PALACE, PARÁ

CHAPTER XVI

THE EXTRACTION OF RUBBER

CONDITIONS IN BRAZIL

IN all my journeyings through the Amazon Valley I have been actuated by the desire to learn all that can be known regarding the actual work of gathering the vegetable products—chiefly rubber—in the dense forests and jungles of South America. Before one can with any degree of assurance state that existing conditions are known to him (not only as regards the actual extractor, but the planter, the trader, and all others who do business with rubber in its various stages from tree to motor-car), he must go through an experience similar to mine. He must have actually been a worker, a trader, a planter, administrator, and, above all, a traveller.

In placing before the public my own experiences and opinions acquired as a result of them, I may occasionally compare South American conditions with those existing in our own Colonial and Oriental plantations.

While those of South America are known to me by having experience of them, I cannot say the same of the Orient. Owing to this difficulty, I have had to rely entirely on whatever I could gather from books, pamphlets, and prospectuses, the writers of which were naturally induced to overlook many labour difficulties.

In the vast forest regions of the Amazon, the wild rubber grows abundantly nearly everywhere. Only a very small proportion of the forests are known to any but the savages. So abundant is the tree itself upon all the rivers, that the seringals[1] are rarely worked beyond a distance of ten kilometres into the heart of the bush. None but those trees conveniently situated close to the waterways are exploited, and so close must they be that it is seldom one finds a seringuero labouring at much more than one half-day's journey from the rivers' banks. It must not, however, be imagined that the proprietors do not possess the right and title to work them.

In Brazil each person desiring to take up land from the Government applies in the usual legal manner for title deeds, describing the points which form his lateral boundaries and frontage. These are in almost every case the boundary lines of some other proprietor, but the depth of the property is never definitely stated, being declared to extend to that part of the forest which is known as "baldio" (meaning unowned), or encounters a part of the forest which is already being worked by another, not necessarily by right. As an instance the following will serve its purpose: A. takes possession of a tract of forest fronting the left bank of a river, which flows parallel with another at a distance of thirty miles or more. B. takes up a position on this second river at a point directly in line with A. on the right bank, both positions being in that case separated only by the intervening forest. Both send men to work who do not penetrate far into the forest, but in the course of time either might wish to sell his property to a powerful company, who would desire to see plans of the region in order to calculate the number of trees which are contained in the property; and, as the law now stands, they would have a claim to all the forest intervening between the worked part of the properties by sending out an agronomical engineer to stake the lines of demarcation. This naturally would exasperate the loser, who might take legal action to protect himself against anyone entering into possession, but in the higher reaches of the river both he and his men would depend upon the authority of the .44 Winchester or the destruction of the trees.

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[1] Rubber estates.

Not all the seringals are held under legal title deeds. Some are known as possessions by right of occupation, while those above mentioned are known as legitimate, after certain taxes and Government charges have been paid.

It is a common occurrence for some neighbour of the last-named kind of proprietor to apply for possession and titles of the seringal, which the Government will accede to, unconscious of its being occupied, owing to its not having been registered. This is a very fruitful source of litigation, violent quarrels, and even murders.

Every seringal before it can be worked requires a great expenditure of energy, hard work, patience, and capital. The trees must be discovered and grouped in lots of from eighty to a hundred trees, and paths leading to them roughly cleared.

The expert employed in this class of work is a skilled bushman (known as a "mateiro"), and his charge for the work is usually very excessive. Taking as the basis of our calculations a seringal of fifty "estradas" (or groups), we have a total of between four and five thousand trees. Before these are ready for the actual rubber cutter, the mateiro must be paid, his remuneration probably amounting to about ten conto of reis (a conto is about £66 sterling). Added to this must be considered his food or other aliments, and that of the proprietor and his helpers. From this it is reasonable to suppose that an estate of fifty estradas must cost about £1000 to open, before a single tree is cut.

There then remains the question of labour. A seringal of fifty estradas would require twenty-five men, who must be brought from great distances, such as Para, Ceara, or Maranham. Before these men can be induced to leave their homes they require advances in cash, they need clothes and other necessaries, and their debts must also be paid. They and their women and families must be transported by steamer, rail, or canoe, and these are necessary expenses which must be met in cash. Taking into account the high rates which are prevalent for transportation, the high cost of living in Para and Manaos, where they are obliged to await the river boat, it is often the rule for a rubber worker to arrive at his destination owing quite £100 to his patron.

On his arrival at the seat of his labours, houses and stores must be built for the master, and for the accommodation of merchandise and rubber. This may take some three months of the man's time, for which he receives no payment beyond his food and shelter. When the buildings are complete the rubber gatherer is at liberty to commence cutting the trees in the two or more groups to which he is assigned.

We have seen that it is the rule for him to arrive with a debt of about £100, which is increased by his purchases of cachasa and other strong liquors, tobacco, matches, and other small things that he requires for himself during the construction of the buildings. If he has a family, these expenses are much increased, and will bring his debt up to £130 or even more. He has now very few clothes, all that he had brought with him having become torn and worn in the extraction of timber from the bush and the construction of houses.

Before he can enter the forest to take up his work as a rubber cutter he must replace them. He must purchase his implements, which consist of large tin basins, tin cups for receiving the milk as it flows from the tree, a pail for bringing the contents of the smaller cups to his hut, a "boiaõ" or smoke cone, tapping axe, machete, and fire-arms. He also requires pans for cooking his food, kettles, and other articles which are necessities, and he must buy food for at least fifteen days.

All these articles are sold to him at a profit to the proprietor of from 60 to 100 per cent, the reason for which will presently be demonstrated.

The seringuero's day commences before sunrise, when, taking his lantern, he penetrates the forest, and, arriving at his first tree, he deposits the can or other receptacle in which he brings the liquid rubber from the forest. Furnished with his small axe, which has a blade of three and a half centimetres and a handle of about eighteen inches, his machete, and perhaps a muzzle-loading gun, he will bleed his first tree. This is done by piercing the bark about seven feet from the ground with a small blunt axe and releasing a little of it by a sharp turn or twist of the implement. In this rough gash he places a thin tin cup which he sticks into the bark. Its capacity is about four liquid ounces. Into the tin cups the liquid rubber flows, and not more than three will be placed upon a tree which has a diameter of three feet. As the trees average a distance of ten minutes' walk through swampy ground, passing from tree to tree and repeating the bleeding process takes up about three hours of the rubber gatherer's time. As the paths through the forest in his ground are circular in their direction, he eventually arrives at the tree closest to his hut, where he had left his bucket or pail. Perhaps resting awhile or visiting his hut to make coffee, he will take up the pail and make a round of the estrada once more. As he comes to each tree he will empty the contents of the tin cups into the larger receptacle until he has emptied all of them, returning again to his hut after noon, if he has spent time in hunting some animal, in which case his rubber may be spoiled, or when smoked be of inferior quality.

To produce good Para grade rubber the latex must be absolutely fluid before it is cured, the process of which is as follows:

The rubber gatherer makes a fire in a specially prepared hollow in the ground, using for this purpose small blocks of massaranduba or other oily wood or the nuts of the urucury (*Attalæ esp*). When this fire is well alight a quantity of the fuel is thrown upon it to produce a thick smoke, and the funnel, which may be of clay or sheet metal, is placed over it. Its shape is conical, but it is open at its apex to allow the smoke to escape, and at its base a small piece of metal about two inches square is cut out. Through this the operator blows occasionally to brighten his fire, and the consequent inhaling of smoke and fumes is the cause of many chest and lung complaints from which these people suffer.

Taking a piece of round wood about one and a half inches in diameter and about seven feet in length, he will cause it to slowly revolve on an arrangement roughly made on the system of a lathe, and worked sometimes by a treadle. As this revolves he will cause a small quantity of fluid to flow from a dipper at a spot over the funnel where the smoke is densest. This causes the rubber to almost instantly coagulate and at the same time assume a round shape, due to the revolving pole. Successive layers are placed upon this rough beginning until the ball attains the required size. If the latex has been absolutely fluid during the whole of the process, the resultant rubber should be hard and fine, but if small coagulated lumps are used, the smoke and heat do not penetrate them, and they appear in the ball as whitish or spongy parts, which are of inferior grade. Whatever rubber latex is left adhering to the receptacles is released by passing them through the smoke, when the cured rubber may be torn away in thin skins, which are used as wrappings for scraps. Some seringueros erect platforms round their trees at a height from the ground which they are unable to attain on foot. Some cut their trees with gashing axes of steel, which, piercing and cutting the wood, are said to damage the tree, and others even make slow fires at the base of old trees, in order to extract increased quantities of rubber. It is a fact that this latter method does attract the latex to the lower portion of the tree, but no tree can survive this treatment.

The quality of the goods furnished to a rubber gatherer leaves much to be desired. Owing to great distances from which they are brought, repeated transhipment and climatic effects, he has to buy beans and rice full of weevils, and jerked beef brought from the meat-preserving factories of Brazil and Uruguay, which by the time it arrives at his hands is a very high price and is so positively infested with life that it is a most nauseous and dangerous food.

It can therefore be readily understood that only a small percentage of the men owe less than £150 before commencing to produce the rubber, that is, those who are imported from their own towns and brought to the rubber estates.

A good rubber estrada or group produces about four quarts of the latex each day that it is worked, but as it is the rule only to cut the tree every other day from Monday to Saturday, each gatherer must bleed two groups, one of which may produce more than the other. Taking four quarts per diem as a basis, this represents four kilos of crude rubber, or twenty-four kilos of smoked rubber per week.

The gatherer, however, never works the whole six days. He cannot work when there is rain, as the rubber when it flows from the tree would mix with the rainwater in the tin receptacles and be of little value. When, as often is the case, rain falls suddenly while the cups containing the latex are suspended, the milk coagulates rapidly and becomes what is known as "sernamby" or scrap. Then, he must devote a certain portion of his time to hunting or fishing in order to provide himself with fresh food. He must chop into small blocks the wood of massaranduba for his smoking cone or furnace, or collect the nuts of the urucury for the same purpose. He is not always in a state of health which permits him to go into the bush, and he never gathers rubber on the "saints' days," or fiestas, whether of the nation, State, or Church.

In view of all these circumstances, it must be assumed that his production may not exceed fifteen kilos per week, and this figure is rarely attained. The "safra," or season, lasts from six to eight months, according to district, making the total possible production 480 kilos of fresh rubber, which, after deducting the tare of 20 per cent which represents the moisture in the rubber, leaves him with 384 kilos, for which the gatherer is generally credited at about 40 per cent. below the prices prevailing, say, in Manaos. Taking the present-day prices as Rs. 3.500 (or 4s. 8d.) per kilo, it can fairly be said that the gatherer cannot receive much more than 3s. per kilo for his product. This would give a gross result of about £60 sterling under very favourable circumstances, which we must reduce by the man's expenses while in the bush. We may safely put these down at the moderate figure of 60 milreis, or about £4 sterling, per month, a total of, say, £30 for the season, leaving only £30 to set off against his original debt of £150. It will be noticed that the man is idle four months every year, during which he is made to work and for which he receives no remuneration beyond bare living expenses.

In this way a really good man, under favourable conditions and retaining his health, could be free in five years, and would have yielded to his patron a profit equalling about one-half his production, which, supposing it to represent the rather large figure of £80, would mean a gross profit of £200 in five years, which in a seringal of fifty groups, or twenty-five men, represents a very fair income.

Without going any deeper into the actual conditions under which the good gatherer lives, it would be well to consider the condition of those who become ill from disease or any accident, or are naturally improvident, idle, or worse.

Owing to the deadly conditions that exist in almost every seringal, due less to climate than to insanitation, bad food, and want of ordinary care, the man who becomes sick has to depend upon patent "cure-alls" or the natural remedies of the forest. From the mortality due to these causes alone the proprietor may expect to lose five out of his batch of twenty-five which formed the basis of my calculations before they can get out of his debt. In many cases they die shortly after arrival, before they have been able to reduce their indebtedness.

Taking now the last-mentioned class of men, it is a fact that a goodly portion of them get into debt without the slightest intention to pay off anything. They are the men mostly to be feared by the proprietor, and cause him many sleepless nights with a firearm ready to his hand.

They are the scum of places like Para, Maranham, Rio Grande do Norte, and other coast towns which they are only too glad to get away from, due to the curb they are obliged to put upon their natural wickedness. They will join any party of rubber labourers that may be in course of formation, and at the expense of the proprietor will be carried into outlying rubber districts. They will behave well, in order to induce the patron to advance them money and goods to the limit of his capacity, when, seeing that no more can be expected, they simply abandon their work.

They will, before leaving, commit all kinds of horrible crimes to hinder pursuit, and they will travel to a distant region of the forest. When they consider they are free from pursuit, they will apply to some proprietor for work, admitting that they are runaways.

They will, however, excuse themselves on the ground of ill-treatment, poor conditions, etc., and are readily listened to by their prospective employer, who perhaps thinks that with a certain amount of care they will turn out useful men. The main consideration, however, is that he finds himself with men ready to work for whom he has not had to lay out any money. The result generally is that the men stay, and are invited to buy at the store whatever they need, which they immediately do to the furthest possible extent. They will again behave well until they have gained the confidence of their employer and are again heavily in debt. They then make preparations for flight, this time obtaining several adherents, generally the men who are heavily in debt due to their own improvidence. Thus the game goes on, until these men become so degenerate as to be positive bandits, robbing and murdering wherever they may go, until at last they either fall into the hands of authorities, or an end is put to their career by a bullet or dagger.

It is calculated that the gross profits of the proprietors are reduced quite 30 per cent from sick men and bandits such as those above described. To this must be added a small percentage for bad debts incurred in selling to neighbours who are not under their control.

Thus we see that although the proprietor may be said to lose a large sum of money, in fact he does not do so. When he sells goods to the rubber gatherer he makes an apparent profit of about 100 per cent, and in buying rubber he gains about 40 per cent.

All rubber estate proprietors or managers buy rubber and sell goods to their employees at a high profit, calculating to protect themselves thereby from losses that may be incurred in the manner above described. The result is that the real losers are the men who work conscientiously, and are honest enough to continue to do so. By the time they do get out of debt their health has become so completely broken, that they are unable to work any longer, and either die in the forest which has cost them so much or are shipped away to die in the streets and hospitals of the cities.

None of this would be either necessary or likely to happen, were it not for the following circumstances:—

The proprietor will not be satisfied with a profit which, with only moderate care, could be obtained, and would keep him in comparative luxury, enabling him to sell his property at the end of ten or twelve years with a competence for the remainder of his life. On the contrary he is, as a rule, a man who has been unsuccessful early in his career owing more to luxurious habits than to a want of knowledge, and unable any longer to remain in the cities, he will, by means of political or other influential help, get a concession. Armed with the legal deeds to a territory, he will obtain financial assistance from wealthy firms in trading centres and, with cash and credit given to him, will get together a body of men and work his seringal as above described.

If he is very successful and practical he will in the course of several years succeed in paying all his liabilities, in the doing of which he will have been a source of great profit to the traders who finance him, but if they see reasons at any time for believing that their money is in danger, they will seize the improved property, thereby indemnifying themselves for the greater portion of their outlay, or in some cases the whole of it, while in many cases, under a good manager, they will in this manner come into possession of a very valuable estate, which yields them enormous profits. Thus even a proprietor is not a free agent, and is almost as much a victim of the system in vogue as his own labourers. This is more so in the case of the proprietor who has been unlucky in the choice of his men (and whose services and corresponding debts he may have lost from sickness, death, or flight) or the degenerate proprietor who has thought little of his future. Therefore, the only really guaranteed people are the persons who advance money on rubber estates, and have a lien upon them and their production; for every proprietor when he becomes an "aviado," or debtor, to a large house, cannot dispose of his products to third parties. He must deliver all his produce to his backers, and, when he does not do so, upon the fact becoming known, it is sequestered. The firm buying it is obliged to deliver it up to the "Casa aviadora," as that which gives him the credit for the working of his seringal is known.

This firm is, from the inception of the rubber estate, the actual proprietor, and is in a peculiarly happy position. Without any great effort on their part, a man can be found who has discovered an unclaimed rubber forest, who is in possession of the deeds showing his proprietorship, and who will work many years in converting the forest into a valuable property. He will buy goods and sell rubber to them in return, producing a profit which covers the interest on their capital outlay, and does all this without any administrative expense to the financier. In case of failure he surrenders his property to them, thereby covering the outlay which any well-organized business house would have advanced. The seringuero is obliged to sell his output of rubber and buy the necessities for his support from the proprietor or manager of the estate upon which he is employed, at prices subject to the whims of his master, who himself, in turn, is in a similar position with his financiers.

They buy his rubber under their own terms, even when they credit him at the market price of the day, and the classification of the article is all done by them, a custom which it can clearly be seen is open to much abuse.

When he requires goods he must also buy them at the price which they think fit to charge; they accept no claim regarding excess in value while the man is in their debt. He also has to pay a commission ranging from 5 to 20 per cent upon his debit balance at the rendering of accounts; and if rubber is delivered to them several days in advance of this event, they will not realize it until a subsequent date. If, however, an indent for goods be sent with the remittance, it will be immediately attended to and included in account, thereby swelling the amount of commission chargeable.

If the hard-working proprietor feels compelled to take legal means for his protection, he must abandon his property to an employee or representative ; he must make a long and expensive journey to the city ; he will require money for his own support during his stay there ; and he must have ample means to induce slow-moving lawyers to take action. All this money he must get from his creditors, who, naturally, will not advance hard cash until they are thoroughly satisfied as to the purpose to which it will be put. If they find that it is required for the enforcement of more favourable terms to their debtor, his hope of obtaining it is nil, whereas if he requires it to spend in debauchery or similar manner, they will advance all that he may require up to the limit of the credit which they consider they can with safety allow him, thereby helping him to revert to his initial condition, nullifying all his efforts covering perhaps many years. If, as I have already inferred, the rubber estate proprietor is a degenerate, so soon as the seringal is opened and represents a value which will show a return or a profit on their outlay, they will attack the property and prevent the man's return to work it.

These are some of the conditions which exist in the seringals in the Brazilian portions of the rivers, where, in most cases the authorities are not very distantly separated, the transactions between financier, employer, and labourer fairly legibly kept, and some legal protection is assured to the man whose financial position guarantees his being able to take advantage of it.

In Brazil peonage, as such, is declared not to exist, and latterly public opinion has been aroused regarding the protection of innumerable savage peoples who inhabit the enormous forest regions in her territory.

What, then, must the conditions be in countries such as Peru, Bolivia, and some parts of Colombia and Ecuador?

In the forest and agricultural districts of these countries, the only available source of labour in any quantity is the Indian in his savage, semi-civilized, or nearly civilized state, almost the whole of whom are illiterates, and whose masters rarely keep accounts of their dealings with them. This is the rule, because it is an unwritten law that the Indian is an animal or a chattel, and as such has no rights. This is largely the case in cities and towns, while in the bush the Indian's life is hopeless. In the first case, he may be purchased by a kind master if he is discontented, whereas in the latter his only ease comes to him when he ceases to exist. He is in a region where the most abominable crimes may be effected and never come to light, while an atrocity may be committed fifty yards into the forest, and yet not be known to any living person within that radius, so dense and so jealous of their secrets are the South American forests. Difficult indeed it is to talk of these things, and impossible to prove them to the outside world, at present, yet some day they will be known and perhaps become less frequent, when travellers tire of searing their souls, and rouse civilization by telling what they have been obliged to witness, and showing by the aid of the camera incontrovertible proof of the conditions under which thousands of human beings are obliged to sacrifice their existence to the enriching of a few and the comforts of unthinking, self-satisfied peoples like our own.

Having tried to make clear the most favourable conditions under which rubber is procured, I will endeavour to instil into the reader's imagination some of the unfavourable conditions, excluding those existent in the Putumayo, which have already been described to the British public.

CHAPTER XVII

THE EXTRACTION OF RUBBER

CONDITIONS IN SPANISH SOUTH AMERICAN STATES

LEAVING Brazil, I will ask the reader to follow me in explaining how rubber, both the fine and caucho qualities, is extracted by Brazil's next nearest neighbours, Peru, Bolivia, and adjacent territories.

The centre of Peru's rubber industry is the Port of Iquitos already described in another part of the book, and its traders supply the Peruvian rubber masters with facilities similar to those in vogue in Manaos and Para in Brazil.

They, however, have not quite the same guarantees as those of the Brazilian cities, as very few of the Peruvian rubber estate owners have any legal claim to their properties beyond the fact of possession.

Here labour is almost wholly Indian, and the trader's only security is in the groups of labourers which he is obliged to take in payment of debt in the case of an unsuccessful Peruvian rubber patron. This man keeps neither books nor accounts which are of any value ; consequently he manages the accounts of *his* Indians so that at any rate they cover his own indebtedness.

In speaking of Peruvian and other American rubber patrons, I will, for preference, use the possessive pronoun, thereby following the usage of the countries which do not include Brazil.

The majority of the Peruvian seringals are on the banks of the rivers Ucayali, Javary, Maranhon and Huallaga, or their affluents, and are operated by forced labour. This also applies to all agricultural pursuits and allied industries. The managers or masters furnish no accounts to their labourers, except when the men desire to work for another master, when his accounts or debts are bought and sold in the manner described earlier in the book.

The seringals are not nearly so large as those in Brazil, and the hard-working gatherer cannot attain his freedom as is the case there.

Unlike the Brazilian, who has had the experience of life in ordered and well-governed cities, and is only a violent and dangerous character when roused, or is desirous of attaining his own ends, the Peruvian Indian is naturally docile, patient, and in every way submissive, due to generations of continued ill-treatment and long suffering.

He is rarely awakened out of his lethargy except by some religious festival, when he becomes fanatical, or when he takes part in some marriage ceremony, dance, or similar kind of diversion.

In the Peruvian seringals his life is a poor one. Unlike his Brazilian neighbour, he is obliged to make long journeys in canoe at his master's wish, or perform any task that may be assigned to him. His actual work as a rubber cutter is interfered with, and he is replaced at any moment by another. He is not compelled, morally or otherwise, to deliver stated quantities at regular intervals to reduce a debt. Whatever he may be employed upon is profitable to his master, simply for the reason that he receives no remuneration, or very little, but his debt is gradually augmented until it reaches a figure decided upon by his master, and from that amount it does not fluctuate.

He receives slight maintenance, and is almost dependent upon his odd moments in bush or river banks for fresh meat or fish to sustain himself or family. He is induced to marry early, being considered fit and competent to take a wife after he has killed his first paiche (*Sudis gigas*) or vaca marina, and his wife is as much the patron's property as he himself. This is the case within a five-mile radius of Iquitos.

Even domestics in Iquitos, who are obtained by Indian hunts, sometimes run away and are advertised for, and described much in the same way as we would advertise the loss of a dog. The warning that "persons detaining same will be prosecuted" is rarely wanting.

Rubber cutters, labourers on farms, sugar plantations, distilleries, boatmen, and domestics, are cruelly whipped, and even done to death, for trivial misdemeanours. They sleep almost invariably under lock and key, while their liberty is restricted and their food absolutely insufficient. Their children are also the property of their masters.

By the boat upon which I travelled from South America a certain Bolivian lady had, as handmaid, a girl who had been born into the service of the lady's father, and was presented to her as a birthday gift, and had been brought up as a serf. This girl had a child, born while in the lady's service, considered by both master and mistress as their property. Cases such as this may be found upon the arrival of most boats from South America, but more particularly the Amazon districts of Peru and Bolivia.

That the Indian employed in almost any capacity in the districts directly under Iquitos administration and that of Bolivia is ill-treated does not bear any contradiction, nor should the stock excuse of the Indian's moral state and usual degeneracy be any longer considered. The Indian under better conditions is capable of great service to his country, provided he were given the rights which the law allows him, but which generations of custom so effectively combat as to render the legal code valueless, in so far as it affects the Indian's general condition. An Indian will run away, and the forces of the law will bring him back again and punish him, as also the person who is foolish enough to give the man shelter and occupation, if even for a very short period.

Generally speaking, these then are the conditions under which the Indian is regarded in the vicinity of Iquitos, but let us examine him when it is decided that his services would yield greater profit in the extraction of caucho (castilloa). I will give one or two examples of the manner in which he is taken from Iquitos, passes the frontier, and makes the journey.

A rubber estate proprietor (seringuero) may find that his trees are becoming exhausted and yield him very little latex, and for this reason he may decide to take his peons to the caucho forests, in which case the journey is made partly by raft, canoe, and steamer. They go perhaps never to return, consequently carry with them their seeds, foods, chattels, and animals, and if the proprietor himself be very successful, he may remain with them hidden away in some obscure river or region, founding, perhaps, the nucleus of some large village or town.

Large plantations will be cultivated, good property put up for the residences of the master, his family, and employees, and, this done, all will settle down to a life similar to that which was their lot thousands of miles away near Iquitos. Here their language and customs will gradually become absorbed in those of the newer district, and if it be Brazilian territory, their condition is much superior than if they had remained in their own country.

It is very rare, however, that the caucheros are in the happy state above explained, and instead of accompanying a man who has been their master the greater part of their lives, they accompany a man who has simply bought their debts, and whom they do not know.

The rule is that in the latter case the new master himself arrives at Iquitos, and by diverse manners and means makes known to the Indian population the fact that he is going to the caucho regions. As there are always a number of discontented Indians (the majority in fact), he is soon inundated with labourers who desire him to pay their accounts, and he will quickly gather round him a large number of would-be caucho workers. If he is an honest man (a rarity in the region), he will pay a portion of the debts of the men ; others, being runaways, have no need of this until their whereabouts are known to their masters.

Those whose debts are paid are retained by him under close supervision, the others are incited to steal canoes and make their way down river to join him below the frontier. If he has not the number he requires, he will kidnap those whom he may find on the sand-banks at night, or in unprotected houses or villages, as he makes his way down river.

The caucheros and their master travel by raft down the main river until arriving at the port nearest to the river which it is their purpose to ascend. If it is his intention to take them to the caucho regions himself, and to work with them, they will be left here while he journeys to Manaos or Para in search of cash and credit. The rule in Manaos until recently was to allow him one conto of reis per man and two contos for himself in calculating the amount of credit which could be allowed him.

If unsuccessful in his search for credit, he would procure some other person in need of labour, and for a monetary consideration sell his Indian peons by transferring their debts without their being considered on the subject. These poor folk would then be taken charge of by their new master and be obliged to do his bidding.

Another system much in vogue is for a man to get together a small body of Indians and take them up the Madeira, Purus, and similar rivers, and apply on the scene of his labours to some local trader for merchandise, armament, and implements, committing himself to work the caucho upon the rubber man's property, and deliver his produce to none other but him. He will work well for several months, and will then apply for cash to carry him to Manaos or other city, in search of more labourers, leaving his own men working. This is generally considered to be quite sufficient guarantee for his return, which he rarely does, perhaps owing to sickness or death, but more generally he takes a holiday with the money so acquired, and repeats the performance in another district.

A case came under my notice early in 1913 of a Peruvian, son of a well-known Peruvian naval officer, who had occasion to abscond from Iquitos.

This man, when near Pevas, came to a sand-bank upon which two young Indian peons, their mothers, wives and children were sleeping, after having been occupied in the collection of turtles' eggs. Taking charge of the men's fire-arms, he obliged the whole party to enter his canoe, and successfully passing the frontier he carried them all to Manaos. Here he made it known that he was going to the caucho regions, and secured goods and credit to carry him to Porto Velho. Upon arrival at this town he made fresh arrangements, and entered into negotiations with a certain

Bolivian already referred to. He carried these poor Indians up the Jacy Parana, yet two months after arrival he abandoned them, giving them up as payment of his own personal debts, and perfectly legal documents were drawn up registering the transaction.

Cruel and hard as is the life of the seringuero, the lot of the Indian peon in the huge caucho regions is terrible to contemplate. Alone in the forest for months at a time, dependent upon his own resources for food, without medicines or comforts of any description, he toils day in and day out, in order to satisfy the demands of his exigent masters. He never comes to the base unless to replenish his stock of ammunition or other very urgent necessity. He is occasionally visited by his master or some employee who is rarely satisfied with the amount of his caucho. Cuffed, beaten, kicked, and in every way cruelly ill-treated, he completes tapping the caucho in his district, and has to carry in alone the whole of his caucho, no matter what the distance and irrespective of its weight. Cases are commonly spoken of where the peon has produced so much caucho as to clear all his debt, and he has known it, but upon requiring a settlement of accounts the Indian was as a rule flogged. I know of cases where patrons have said that it was their custom when leaving caucho regions to carry away with them only those Indians who were in debt, as they had paid those who had worked well with a bullet and left them to rot. It is a well-known fact in rubber centres that a rubber peon rarely returns to his home, whether in debt or out of it.

I have repeatedly met caucheros who have bewailed the fact that they were short of goods to give their men; not in the Indians' interest, but because they were afraid that the Indians, if they did not buy anything, would soon think themselves out of debt, in which case the caucheros would be obliged to shoot some of them so as to save further trouble.

Hundreds of Indians lose their lives in this manner. Another very common system is that of working caucho in districts where savage Indians are known to exist.

"Correrias," or Indian hunts, are organized, and whole villages decimated, care being taken to spare all young and useful girls, women, and males. These are carried to the camps in captivity, and are made to work rubber, and, if they survive, are sold. This is, as most travellers to the Spanish-American Republics know, a very common occurrence.

Certain important circumstances prevent me from detailing specific acts of cruelty, which perhaps will be made public through a better medium, but there is no doubt that a very easy manner to reduce South American rubber atrocities would be to absolutely boycott all rubber from the district, thereby ensuring the abandonment of the forests in favour of communities where the conditions of the Indian and other labourers would be more accessible to the general traveller.

I have no doubt that all interested in the subject will agree that the conditions under which wild rubber is produced on the Amazon and its affluents must be classed as one of the most nauseating horrors of the century.

CHAPTER XVIII

NATURAL HISTORY

ANIMALS, BIRDS, ETC.

IN the course of my narrative I have mentioned the names of some of the animals, birds, fishes, reptiles, etc., encountered in my journeyings, but a description of the country would be incomplete without a short study of the fauna in general. Beginning with the carnivorous animals will be found the following :—

The canguçu, as it is called by the Brazilians, and onça or jaguar by the Peruvians (*Felis onça*), is a large and sometimes dangerous brute. Its coat is of a light yellowish colour, and beautifully marked with black stripes on the breast, with irregular black spots and rings on its body. It is said that he will sometimes even eat the alligator, beginning at the tail, and that the reptile becomes so paralysed that he makes no resistance. This is commonly stated by the Indians in most of the rivers. It may be their imagination, but it is a striking fact that there are those who speak of it who are separated by long distances. However, it is a fact which has come under the author's notice, that this animal shows little fear of coming out to the open sandbanks in the dry season, in search of turtle, of which it is very fond, and in some way will completely empty a turtle-shell of the meat without breaking it. His principal food is deer, capibara, and other small animals and birds, and the Indians claim that when desirous of eating the inhambu, the jaguar whistles like the bird's mate, on hearing which she approaches and then falls an easy prey to his sagacity. Others of the same tribe are the black species. The ocelot (*Felis pardalis*), the puma (*Felis concolor*), and the tigrilla or tiger cat, smaller than the ocelot. All are very common and rarely attack man, but cause much trouble where cattle, sheep, pigs, and dogs, etc., are kept. When attacking members of this species, the Indians are armed with a strong pronged stick, which they thrust under the animal's neck to support him when he rears, in order that they may the more easily plunge their knives into his body.

Of the canine family the red wolf, " cachorro do matto " (*Jubatus*) is found, but is not common ; the writer during the whole of the time he was in the country saw no more than six, one of which was in captivity, but not domesticated ; another the raposa (*Canis Braziliensis*), a kind of fox which does much damage to fowls and other domestic birds.

The lontra (*Lontra Braziliensis*) is the largest of the otters. It has a fine thick velvety coat which could be successfully used by furriers, and the trade in its pelt could be made very profitable at little expense of capital or comfort. There are also the irara and the " cachorinho do matto " (*Gastictis rittata*).

The coati (*Nasua rufa*, *Nasua naurica*, and others) is common almost everywhere, and when domesticated is a very amusing but rather treacherous pet. When attacked by a dog it is very often victorious, sometimes killing several before being itself killed.

Deer are very numerous, and are of many kinds, including *Cervus paludosus* (found only in the low lands), *rufus* found in higher reaches of the Amazon, the *compestris*, and a very small greyish kind, not unlike a goat, but short-coated and without a beard, which is found in such rivers as the Tamaya, Jurua, etc., living in the underbrush. It is rarely found in the denser Amazon forests, but in ground where the growth is small it is very abundant.

The tapir or anta of the Brazilians and sacha vaca of the Peruvians, is the largest of the South American mammals, being about eight feet long and four in height. When caught young it is easily tamed. It is very powerful, and the writer saw one being used in harness at a place close to Iquitos, where it furnished the motive power for a sugar cane crusher or trapiche. It has an elongated snout, with which it loosens the ground to get at the roots which are its food. The young are spotted like the deer. Their food is purely vegetable, and the cry to its mate is a shrill short whistle. The meat is good, and the uses to which its hide are put have already been explained.

The wild pig (*dycotylis*), called by the Brazilians queixada, owing to its powerful jaws, and by the Peruvians huangana, wanders about the forests in large herds, destroying and consuming everything edible which comes in its way; according to the natives, eating even snakes, and dead bodies of animals, birds, and even humans. When surprised or angry it makes a clicking noise with its sharp tusks. It is often dangerous to meet a herd of them, for they will attack men. A smaller kind is the caitetu (so called in Brazil and sajino in Peru), which is not dangerous, and is never found in parties of more than six, but more generally is encountered in pairs. Both have strong black and grey bristles, and just over the hind quarters is a kind of tumour or sweat gland which gives off a very offensive odour. Their bodies are always infested with the carapato, and before one hunts them a bath of pure alcohol or some other strong fluid is very necessary, in order to prevent their infesting one's own body.

The porcupine is far from common and difficult to capture because dogs cannot be induced to face it.

The capivara, many times mentioned in the book, is an amphibious rodent. It is prevalent everywhere, and does much damage where crops are planted. It is a reddish-coated animal, in appearance not unlike a large guinea-pig. It swims and dives with great ease owing to its webbed feet.

The cutia (*Dasyprocta agenti*), about the size of a rabbit and of similar habits, has a coat covered with stiff, bristly hair, which stands up when the animal becomes excited. They are of various colours, ranging from pale grey to black; and a reddish variety is sometimes found. Its skin has an offensive, sour odour, though the meat is excellent when cooked. The incisors are used by the Indians for hollowing out the inner tube of their blowpipes.

The paca is a similar animal, but as large as a hare. It is of a reddish colour, beautifully marked with white spots and stripes. Like the hare it does not live in burrows made by itself, but is occasionally to be found in deep holes vacated by other animals, and in the hollow trunks of trees. Its flesh is considered by the river dwellers to be one of the most delicious obtainable from the forests.

Two smaller kinds, called in Brazil moco and pream, and in Loreto punchana, are also very fine eating. They are decidedly reddish brown in tint, and have short scaly tails.

One of the prettiest animals to be found in the Amazon forest is the tamanduá, as it is known in Brazil, or oso hormiguero in Peru. There are several kinds similar in appearance, differing only in their height. They are toothless, but are provided with long claws which cut like knives, for burrowing and excavating the ground to get at the ants, worms, and insects which are their food. The fur of the tamanduá is long like a goat's, in wide black and white bands. Its head is long, thin, and very pointed, covered with short hair, while its tail is long and bushy. It is very inoffensive, but, owing to the difficulty in procuring food for it, is rarely kept in captivity, though it could be easily tamed.

The armadillos are common, being found in colonies of from ten to fifty, in holes dug in the sides of high clay banks or hills. There are several kinds, amongst the most common being *Lysurius unicinctus,* largely eaten by the local inhabitants. It has a peculiar and disagreeable taste to most Europeans, but is probably much appreciated locally owing to this flavour, which is not unlike that of the cummin seed used in most Brazilian foods.

The mucurra, so called by the Brazilian river dwellers, is an opossum of which numerous varieties are known to the natives. Each carries its young in a pouch in the lower part of the abdomen. The tails of the young are prehensile, and are used by them in the pouch twisted round the body of the mother in order to ensure greater security.

The mucurra is an animal feeder, and where fowls are kept is exceedingly destructive. As food in many districts of the Amazon their flesh is much appreciated, but I have never knowingly eaten them as, owing to their repugnant appearance and long scaly tail, they are very uninviting.

Another animal very often found when felling trees is the sloth (*Tardigrada*), a large, sad-looking animal, with bleary eyes. Its coat is long and coarse, and of a greyish colour. It is furnished with long curved claws with which it suspends itself, as it travels slowly from branch to branch in an inverted or hanging position.

Among the better-known monkeys are the guaribas or cotos, as the Peruvians call them. They are classified as *Simia mycetes*. They are known to Englishmen as howling monkeys, due to their throaty cry or howl, which is produced by a large hollow growth in the region of the throat. Their cries can be heard at a great distance. They are very large, reddish brown in colour, and have a long, tufted prehensile tail, five fingers on each hand, large heads, and bodies about two feet long. As food they are considered to be the best of the edible monkeys. They are, however, hard to shoot, as their movements are very cunning, and when discovered they attempt to hide in their "bancos" (as the fork of the tree in which they live is known). They travel little, and live in pairs in the high trees, choosing those where a sunken fork or hollow exists.

The spider monkeys are mostly found in the higher reaches of the Amazon or in the little-navigated rivers where there is high ground. The Peruvians call them "macke-sapa." They are long-limbed, but have short bodies with a prehensile tail. They are of various colours, ranging from light grey, grey with white to black bellies, with faces of the same colour. A pink-faced species is also known. The coatá is another monkey seldom seen ; it has long grey or black and white hair, and a bushy tail. This species is not often eaten, or only when no other foods are available. Caucheros and others who value their dogs exercise great care in the disposal of its bones which, if eaten by their canine pets, cause, it is said, a madness succeeded by death in a very few hours.

The barrigudo (*Lagotrix*) is a stumpy black monkey with short thick hair. It is called by the Peruvian river dwellers chorro. They are slow-moving and very easily tamed, and unlike most other monkeys they are quiet and not mischievous, their whole manner being one of great seriousness, intensified by the expression of their large dark eyes. Other smaller varieties are the ebus or crying monkey, jacchus, misas, pithecia, nigra, saturnina, and hirsuta, the marmosets and the night monkeys, some of which are remarkably pretty.

All those above described are mammals of the forests, and most are amphibious, but those described below are of the family of cetaceans, and inhabit only the water. The vaca marina, so called in Peru, or peixe-boi in Brazil, which means cow-fish, is the manatee (*Manatus Americanus*). It feeds on the young shoots of wild cane and floating grass and weeds. The fishermen pursue it, as it is greatly valued for its oil, meat, and skin. Preserved in its own grease, the meat is much sought after in the north of Brazil, where quite a profitable trade is being done. Its hearing is wonderfully acute, and when, owing to the height of water in the river, it is difficult to spear it, the fishermen lay a kind of trap at the inlet of a small lake which the animal is known to frequent. The trap itself is made of strong cord, and is cylindrical in shape, being kept open at both ends by large hoops of thin liana. From these hoops a thin rope is passed to shore, a slight pull on which will cause the trap to collapse. The Indian will sit for hours at night, absolutely alone, and hardly moving even to kill mosquitoes which annoy him, for he knows that the animal, upon hearing the slightest unfamiliar sound, will not pass in or out of the lake, and therefore cannot be trapped. The entrance of the vaca marina is made known to the fishermen by the animal coming in contact with the lines which are passed from bank to bank, not sufficiently strong for the cetacean to notice, yet strong enough to cause a pull on the ends in the hands of the Indian. This animal is said by some naturalists to be the mermaid of the early mariners, and its form when suckling its young is certainly striking enough to cause a faint resemblance to a young woman, before becoming fully developed.

The remaining water mammal is the boto (*Phœnus Braziliensis*), of which there are several species. The most commonly seen is red, another white. They are ugly-looking creatures, and when they come up to breathe they throw off a very offensive smell. They travel in pairs, and keep to the deep channels of the rivers and lakes. The fishermen say that they can tell when the river is about to rise and fall, guided only by the habits of this animal, for when it swims up river the water will maintain its height or rise, while if it descends it is an indication that the river will certainly fall. The white species is inoffensive, but the red one is greatly feared, for although both are carnivorous, the red one is exceptionally voracious. The writer has seen them fighting both the boa-constrictor and the alligator.

Other large denizens of the Amazon waters are the alligators, of several kinds. The largest and most ferocious are *C. nigra*, *C. Catirostris*, and *C. sclerops*. They attain a length of twenty to twenty-five feet, and along with the smaller species do much damage to the pigs, fowls, etc., of the river's inhabitants, and are very destructive to fish and turtles. They do attack man, but very rarely when the person is out of the water, the writer knowing of only two cases where persons have been knocked off boats or rafts by the tail of this monster. There is no doubt, however, that they are to be really feared when one is in the water swimming or bathing, but the natives will bathe with impunity in moderately shallow water, where the jacares, as they are locally called, may be seen with their heads or snouts above water. The natives say that no danger may be expected from them so long as the alligators remain above water, but that immediately they submerge themselves it is wise to leave the water in haste, as it is this brute's custom to seize his prey from below the water's surface, carrying it away to some place to hide it, as he does not often eat flesh until putrefaction sets in. The smaller kinds are eaten, principally a small green one, which is considered good food, as also are the eggs, which are of a strong musky flavour.

Of the same family (*Saurio*) are iguanas, called variedly camaleon, tyu-assu, largarto verde, etc. All swim exceedingly well, and they are of two colours, two being green with brown markings, while another (*Teguexin*) is a dark grey or black variety with yellow markings. Its skin, cut from the body in sections, is much prized by the river inhabitants, who use it for wristlets and amulets. These are said to give greater strength to the arm, prevent rheumatism, and are a charm against snake-bites, venomous stings, etc.

Turtles and others of the same family require no further explanation, as much has already been said about them, but the land tortoises should not escape attention. They cannot swim, living purely in the forest. They are vegetable feeders, and are much prized as food, the liver of one in particular, the jaboty, at certain seasons of the year growing to a great size, when it is considered a delicacy. There are many other kinds, among them being the mucuan, but all have highly rounded shells, the carapace or dorsal being marked in black and yellow, while the plastron or ventral shield is generally of a pale yellow colour.

The mata-mata is an ugly snake-headed mud turtle. Its head is furnished with ligaments like those found on catfish. It feeds on snakes and other reptiles, and is eaten by the natives. Its length is about three feet.

The boa-constrictor and the anaconda are not generally found in the Amazon River proper, being restricted to the lakes, swamps, smaller rivers, and creeks, where they are very abundant. They grow to a great size and length, specimens of the latter being known of over forty feet. One measuring over ten metres, beautifully marked in black and yellow, which was skinned by the writer and a friend, contained a large alligator in an advanced state of putrefaction. Its skin was brought to England by a party of Englishmen as being a remarkably long one, though it was really of a size quite common. The anaconda is generally of a brownish tint, and seems to confine itself to the lakes. It is probably the " mae de agua," or mother of the water, of the Brazilian Indian fishermen, who state that some lakes are dangerous to navigate in canoe, owing to the presence of some fearful monster, which wreaks vengeance and destruction on all who disturb its solitude. During the construction of the Madeira-Mamore Railway, many huge specimens of boa and anaconda were destroyed. Before consuming their prey, they dislocate or break the bones by the pressure of their coils, to facilitate consumption, and are said to be able to swallow a bullock. They do, however, swallow the tapir with comparative ease. Their eggs and flesh are eaten by the Indians.

Another snake, but a land one, also kills its prey by crushing it in its coils. It is the giboia, also a large species, which lives only on cutias, pacas, rats, and other small rodents. As it is harmless, it is frequently kept in captivity, living in the thatch or under the flooring of the houses, for the extermination of rats, etc.; all that is necessary to ensure its remaining is a large basin of clean water, in which it bathes, and a plentiful supply of food.

Venomous snakes are prevalent almost everywhere, and as the river rises, they leave the low lands for high ground, in the attaining of which they will swim long distances. Among the worst, and at the same time most known and feared, are the surucucu (chuchupi machaco in Peru), which is said to whistle to its mate. It is a long reddish coloured snake, and its bite is nearly always fatal; even if the victim is able to escape death the region of the bite always rots and withers away. It is noticeable for its very large fangs. Others are the cascabel (rattlesnake), so called from the hard skinny plates at the end of its tail, with which it makes a slight noise; the jararaca, the coral, in black, red, and yellow; the louro machaco, a long green snake of the colour of the Amazon parrots; the jergon; and a host of smaller ones of which I do not remember the names, but all very venomous.

There is also a kind of large moth or grasshopper, with a large ugly head and transparent body and wings, known to the Brazilians as jaquirana boa, and to the Peruvians as chicharra machaco, meaning in Quechua "grasshopper snake." It is the common belief that it is blind, and flies only at night, and that upon colliding with an object it raises a sting or lancet on the under part of its body which, penetrating the skin, causes a wound which is often fatal.

So prevalent is this belief among the people, that on one occasion, just after the installation of electric light in the streets of Iquitos, I saw many stampedes from shops and public places due to the appearance of this insect, which had been attracted by the light. I never met with an actual case of sickness caused by it, yet there must be some ground for the widespread fear it inspires.

Frogs are common to the region, and among them is the rana, which has already been referred to as an article of diet.

Passing to the birds of the region, perhaps one of the most remarkable is the hoatzin, anna, or horned screamer, a bird about the size of a small turkey, and generally found in pairs; it lives close to swamps or on the borders of the lakes, when its presence is easily known by its piercing cry. Its plumage is blackish and grey, and it has a large powerful beak attached to a long neck and horny head, large red-spotted wings, which are furnished at the under part of the bends with two spikes, the larger, near the centre, being nearly three inches long, and the other, a little smaller, is placed near the tip. These spikes or spurs are very thick, hard, and bony. It is a vegetable feeder, living on floating water-plants. Its young when hatched are yellow, and are also remarkable for the character of their heads and necks, which, owing to the absence of down, give them a snake-like appearance.

One of the largest birds found in the Amazon region is the harpy eagle (*Thrasætus harpyia*), which will attack without fear any other bird with which it comes in contact. The urubu has been described in the chapter on Para, and the eagle, in its encounters with the several species of this carrion bird, is nearly always the victor. It preys on monkeys, large birds, young deer, and pacas. Hawks and falcons of many kinds are to be found, the cara-cará among others being one of the most common, so called from its cry, which resembles these words. The urubu tinga may be seen in the rivers almost daily, and where cattle are reared it is a sure guide to animals which die or become lost in the bush, owing to its habit of feeding early in the day or late in the evening. During the remainder of the day it may be seen circling in the air over a carcass, or perched high up in some lofty tree near by. Another is the swallow-tailed kite (*Nauclerus garcatus*), but this is not very common. There are many other smaller carrion birds and birds of prey, all very numerous.

Among the birds used for food are the following :—

The curassow (*Crax alector*) takes first place. These are large blackish green birds, white underneath, and at tip of the tail, while the beak is black and yellow. There are three or more varieties, the curassow proper being locally known as piuri ; another is known as paughil, distinguished by a horny growth on his reddish yellow beak ; another as puca-kunga, another as montetti, and still another as pava, the last four being their Peruvian names. The Brazilian names are not known to me.

The first two are about the size of a turkey, being some three feet in length. They are noticeable for crests of pretty black curled feathers, locally used when mounted as trinkets. The puca-kunga is of a very pretty golden brown colour, with reddish skin round the eyes and throat. The pava is blackish green in colour, with rounded wings, long white-tipped tail feathers, blackish beak and legs, and whitish under parts. The skin around the eyes is red and green, and it has a short crest.

The montetti is similar to the puca-kunga in colour, size, and form, but has no red throat. Its eyes are surrounded by blue and red skin and short feathers.

A species of partridge-like birds is very common, the large variety (*Tinamus Braz.*), and the smaller one (*Tinamus* *tatanpa*), falling very easily to the gun, by imitating their calls.

The trumpetero is a very pretty bird, with the major portion of his plumage of blackish green to purplish black at the neck and head. Its eyes are very black and bright.

The orioles (*Casicus*). These birds of the hanging-nest species are exceedingly common wherever there is human habitation. They will take charge of and occupy two or three large trees at a time, filling the smaller branches and twigs with their peculiar and wonderful nests, which are suspended from them. The entrance to the nest is at the bottom, leading to a chamber in which the female lays her eggs and hatches the young.

They are extremely noisy, whistling and chattering all day long.

Similar to the birds above described in the manner of their hanging-nests, etc., and their habits in general, are the japims or yellow troupials. They are easily tamed, and both when captive and in their natural state they imitate the cries of other birds with extreme facility. In colour they are black and yellow. In choosing trees in which to found their colonies, they prefer those in which one or more nests of the various species of hornets and wasps are to be found, in this manner rendering the stealing of the young a risky operation, which no ordinary man will attempt, fearful of the stings of the insects.

It is said that another of their reasons for building close to the wasps is that their young are fed on the larvæ.

Other beautiful birds are the tanagers, the chatterers, the jacamars, and trogons, which are also common almost anywhere, but more particularly so in the upper reaches of the rivers.

Macaws, parrots and allied species have been so frequently described by naturalists as to render unnecessary any further description on my part.

Humming birds may be seen even in the streets of the large cities such as Manaos, Para, or Iquitos, as they fly from bush to bush or flower to flower in the private and public gardens. Those varieties found in the lower Amazon regions are rarely what might be called beautiful species. Their colours are usually black ranging to blackish green or purple and brown to bright bronze. Those, however, of the upper reaches are really beautifully coloured, and are gorgeous examples of the feathered world.

Their feathers are much used by the Indians for all kinds of decorative work such as ornamenting their lances, paddles, also for personal adornment.

The long-toed jacanas are not often seen on the banks of the larger rivers, but are fairly common on the small lakes or cochas in the interior forest. They seem to prefer those expanses of water which contain large patches of the Victoria Regia lily, and other aquatic plants. Their agility in running from plant to plant, scarcely stopping for an instant upon floating leaves which scarcely bear their weight, is remarkable.

Another bird peculiar to the region is the flycatcher, known as bemtevi, meaning in English " I saw you well." This local name is given to it on account of its peculiar note or whistling, which, continuously repeated, appears to form the phrase.

One of the commonest birds seen on the Amazon bank has a very pleasing appearance. It is locally known as the cigana, or gipsie. In Peru it is known as shancho. Its plumage is of a rich golden brown and red, and its size about that of our own English pheasant. Upon its head it has a very pretty crest, not unlike that of the curassows. They are vegetable feeders, and are always seen in flocks flying from tree to tree, seeming to prefer the seticos, the leaves of which, when young, are eaten by them. They have an extremely repugnant odour and are of no value as food.

As one travels up or down the river, it is remarkable to notice towards the dusk of the evening five or eight peculiar black birds, with long thin beaks and very narrow wings, flying close to the surface of the water. They are the well-known water-cutters or razor-bills.

Muscovy ducks may be seen in the whirlpools and quiet backwaters of all the main streams, while in the smaller creeks and lakes they are exceedingly numerous. Owing to their great size (this bird being one of the largest of known ducks) they offer an easy mark with the rifle for an ordinarily good marksman. The female is as a rule almost completely black in the colour of its plumage. The male, however, has white wings and sometimes white and black. The beak of the male is of a yellowish tint, surmounted by a large bright red growth.

Other birds that are continually met with are the gulls and terns. They may be seen almost any day on the rivers, sitting in parties of sometimes thirty on the logs or small floating islands as they are carried by the river towards the sea. The Indians say that these birds will sometimes travel for three and four days seated on a floating log, enjoying their food as they go, without at any time taking flight.

The different varieties of toucan may be seen flying across rivers with their peculiar up-and-down motion, said by some to be caused by the excessive weight of their beaks, and it really does seem as though these birds when in flight would drop into the river before reaching the opposite bank.

This does happen with the inhambu and kindred birds which are of short flight.

At one particular place on the Amazon just below the town of Matura the river narrows greatly, and here it is quite a common occurrence for as many as forty or fifty birds to be taken as they float down stream. At night the sand-banks almost everywhere are the resting-place of countless nightjars and goat-suckers. Towards the fall of the evening one may see these birds flying low down in the air, their fork tails giving them an appearance not unlike our own swallow. Their plumage is mottled, being dark brown with variegated grey spots and stripes.

At every bend of the river hundreds of parakeets have their being, making their homes in hollows of trees or in the abandoned nests of the white ant already referred to. Each hollow or nest will sometimes contain as many as sixty pairs of these brilliant little birds.

Varieties of kingfishers are everywhere, and their bright colours do much to relieve the monotony of the river banks. They nest in colonies on the sides of hard clay or soft sandstone cliffs. The nest itself is at the end of a long narrow gallery, which runs almost directly horizontally from the entrance, and is some twelve feet in length. In order to procure the eggs or young it is necessary to provide oneself with a long thin pole or twig, at the end of which are attached several hooks, tied together to form a kind of grapnel. The river Indians and fishermen, almost without exception, have several of these birds in domesticity close to their houses.

A bird of the heron family, of a deep brownish colour, with mottled yellow spots and with a greenish and yellow beak, may also be seen in the shadow of the trees. It is locally known as the puma garça and is, I think, *B. stellaris.*

Boatbills on the Amazon proper are not very common, but are abundant in the small lakes in the interior of the forests. They are in size much like the heron above referred to, but their plumage is white, while their bill, as the name imples, is flattened out, giving it the appearance of a spoon.

Another variety of this bird, the roseate spoonbill, is very rarely seen on the Amazon or other main rivers. It is extremely abundant in the higher reaches of the Amazon and its affluents, seeming to favour localities where the bush is not very dense. The feathers of this bird are greatly used by the Indians in the making of their ornamental feather head-dresses, and some of the Tucuna Indians can make exceedingly pretty garments, shaped something like a cape, from the larger feathers of the bird.

The pavon, a well-known water bird, is rarely seen except by accident. Their habits are very little known, even to the natives, who, whenever they happen to obtain one of these beautiful specimens while young, make every endeavour to carry it to their maloccas or villages, when it soon becomes tame, and in a very few weeks follows its owner about like a dog, answering to its name whenever called upon. In colour they are brown, fronted with pretty small grey feathers. Their beaks are red, while their legs have a reddish yellow tint.

Other birds closely allied to the ducks are two species of geese, the larger one being of a pale grey colour with black neck, yellow beak and legs. The smaller variety is found only in the swamps, and although in form remarkably like a goose, it is not much larger than a common fowl. These are called marequinhas.

Another pretty bird, called the unchala, from its cry, is said by the Indians to call to its mate only when the water is about to rise. Yet another of the peculiar birds to be found in the Amazon region appears to be a species of stork standing about four feet in height. Its plumage is mainly white or clear grey, but from the breast to the top of the neck it has a black, featherless, skinny covering, which the bird is able to inflate. The head is devoid of feathers, and is covered with a hard scaly skin, while the beak is long and black. It is to be found at certain periods of the year in the Igapós, or flooded lowlands, shortly after the main rivers begin to fall, when it appears to subsist on small fishes, either in their fresh or putrid state, which are left behind by the receding waters. Its flesh is not used by the natives as an article of food.

CHAPTER XIX

NATURAL HISTORY

FISHES, REPTILES, ETC.

THE Amazon and other bodies of fresh water in the region contain immense quantities of fish of almost innumerable varieties, over one thousand distinct species having been found in one small lake.

The largest fish found in the Amazon (*Sudis, Vastres gigas*), known in Brazil as pirarucu, and in Peru as paiche, has already been referred to. This is covered with plates or scales about three inches in circumference, or even more; its head is long and narrow, slightly resembling that of the sturgeon. In length it grows about seven feet and in weight about three hundred pounds. It is much pursued by the fishermen, who obtain it by means of the harpoon. To be anything like successful in the pursuit of this fish requires many years of skilful training, boys being taught from childhood, beginning by accompanying their fathers or other male members of the family in a canoe, when they are strictly bound to silence, and taught to observe the procedure of their parents, later on being entrusted with the guidance of the canoe.

Their aim with the lance is perfected while they are on shore by throwing at a very small mark. They are shown how to ascertain the presence and position of the fish by such indications as bubbles, the moving of grass or other growths where the fish feed, and, above all, to distinguish even in rough water the ripple caused by its powerful tail and fins, while by the largeness of the ripple they calculate the fish's depth below water and the distance necessary for it to swim before its ripple can be noticed. All this they learn so accurately that they become almost certain when the harpoon will penetrate the tail-end, which is to be desired as, owing to the small bones, the harpoon gets a better hold than would be the case if it struck a portion that were purely flesh, in which case the fish in its struggles will break the softer part away and escape. Its flesh before salting is very palatable; the bones of the spine and tail, with the head and the fins, make an excellent soup which is very nutritious, and is the basis of alimentation of the fishermen, who ascribe particular virtues to it. The tongue is hard and bony, and has a surface like a rasp, which tool it replaces among them. The flesh, when cured, is one of the staple articles of food in the whole of the Amazon region.

The curing process is done as follows: The fish when dead is dragged on shore and the scales removed. It is then cut into long, thick strips weighing about fifteen pounds, which are in turn cut in such a manner that they become about the thickness of cured haddock. These strips are then salted and allowed to remain untouched in some shady or moderately cool place for twenty-four hours. They are then hung on long poles in the rays of the sun and in this way become dry, attaining the hardness of a board in from three to four days.

Other important fishes are the tambaqui or gamitana; the pescada or corvina, which contains two stony pearl-like substances in its head; tucanaré, caught by baiting a spinner with red rag; the curimatá or boquichico; the matrichão or sabalo; the pacú or palometa; the pira pitinga; the piranha, a voracious fish already referred to, sometimes miscalled palometa; the sardina, a long, pretty silver-scaled fish, the jandiá, and the piaú, all scaled fishes.

Among the scaleless fish are the pirára and pirahyba, very big fish, which are extremely voracious and rarely used as food; surubim, mandubi, piramatuba, and pira-boton, so called owing to the peculiar button-like substances in its throat. In the lakes many kinds of fish are to be found, like perch in appearance but of variegated hues, some of a peculiar purplish colour being excellent eating.

Another common fish is of the family of eels—the electric eel (*Gymnatus electricus*). It is found in the backwashes and deep pools at the edge of the Amazon, in the mouths of creeks and lakes, chiefly in deep water.

It kills its food by discharging a powerful electric shock which is said to be capable of stunning an ox, and is much feared. Another very dangerous denizen of the rivers is the sting ray. It has a long tail, furnished with a poisonous spike or lance about midway down the tail, with which it strikes anyone unfortunate enough to enter the water near it. It is very common in shallow water on the edges of the sand-banks, favouring those that are covered with soft mud, in which it lies partly concealed. The spike is much used by the natives as a remedy for toothache, as a kind of lance with which they cut the covering of the gums. Its toxic properties are so great that the wound, if not immediately cared for, soon becomes a suppurating black mass, sometimes resulting in gangrene and afterwards death.

A very common fish to be found in the rivers and lakes is the cara-chama. This fish is in shape not unlike the gurnet, a peculiar grey in colour, large head, and body about twelve inches long and very tapering.

Its mouth is underneath, and is furnished with a circular membrane. It lives in or burrows holes in the hard banks of the river, and is a bottom feeder. The whole body is covered with hard scales which form a single piece. Its flesh is much appreciated by the river dwellers.

This particular fish, locally called acari, is found in a variety of shades, ranging from steely or slaty grey to a yellowish brown, and sometimes attains a length of fourteen inches, Its flesh is much appreciated by the local inhabitants on account of its savouriness and the absence of small bones.

Another armoured fish, provided with thick bony scales, is the arapaima. In appearance it is something like a piraracu (*Sudis gigas*), and its flesh is remarkably sweet, and of a texture not unlike our English whiting.

The forests are full of beautiful butterflies, some very large and magnificent ones (morphos), mainly of brilliant blue, with brown and other shades. They are continually to be met with in the paths or open spaces in the forests. The variety classed as *Epicalea ancea* is one of the most common, but though large they are very hard to capture, and when secure in the net easily become broken in their efforts to free themselves. Their strength and the brittleness of their wings make it difficult to secure good specimens.

Another very common butterfly is the *Hætera Esmeralda*, with a strikingly clear purple spot on its wings.

Ants abound everywhere, and nothing is secure from their attacks. The largest specimen is a large greenish black one, furnished with a very poisonous sting, which will cause a high fever when one is unfortunately stung by them. It is found mostly about the roots of the assayi palm in colonies. The Indians, when stung, capture it whenever possible, and eat it, by this means reducing the pain of the wound. To be stung by several at one time is considered by some to be second only to snake-bite in its effect. The writer while felling a palm unconsciously disturbed a colony of this species, and was stung by three of them upon the foot. The poison numbed the limb, rendering it for a time useless, whilst the local pain was terrific and all the glands of the body were affected, probably causing the high fever which accompanied the pain and which lasted two whole days.

Another large ant is the saüba, known in the Peruvian forests as curuinci. It is reddish brown in colour and has very powerful pincers or jaws with which it can inflict a nasty wound that will bleed profusely. It will destroy the foliage of a tree in a single night, and carry away grain such as corn, rice, etc., in large quantities, and even destroys clothing which it may find upon the ground. It cuts leaves into small pieces and carries them on its back to its nest, likewise corn and other cereals with perfect ease. It is a very troublesome pest where there are plantations, living in huge colonies, in the formation of which it will construct large hillocks from the soil that it excavates in the making of its home. At certain periods of the year when it attains very large proportions and is furnished with wings, it is much sought after by the natives, who pluck off the head and wings and eat the body raw. These ants will occupy the same piece of ground sometimes for a period of as much as twenty to twenty-five years when not disturbed. It is not generally known that it is quite easy to drive them away from plantations where they do so much damage, by interring the corpse of any small animal or any decayed matter close to the hill which they make their home.

Other peculiar ants build large round nests in the trees, and, when they become hard and exposed to the elements for a lengthened period are of a structure remarkably like thin cardboard or asbestos packing.

White ants are to be found mostly on the branches of the seticos or imba uba trees, the entrances to both being approached by means of small tunnels covered over with mud which is the substance of the nest itself. When the females arrive at maturity and fly away, it appears that the nest is abandoned, when it becomes the home of many varieties of parakeets which frequent the Amazon rivers.

Other kinds of ants, when taken in the hand and subjected to slight pressure, will throw off a strong acid substance which will burn the fingers, and if one is careless enough to rub one's eyes while the acid remains, the result is a very painful smarting and inflammation.

Another peculiar variety, exceedingly small, will sometimes, during wind storms, be blown into the eye, and the acid that it throws off will cause inflammation lasting many days.

The puca cura is a small red ant, hardly visible to the eye, which, wherever it touches the skin, sets up a most painful irritation, probably from the same cause (the freeing of acid).

Another variety very common in the forests is a large brown one which I am unable to classify, and is very often found in the seticos and smaller trees. It is provided with a sting which inflicts great pain. It is a common thing early in the morning to see certain small trees covered with huge spiders' webs which, with the action of the mist during the night, have the appearance of a sheet of muslin, or bridal veil, covering the whole of the tree, and, the sun shining upon this, it glitters like jewels.

Another species of spider is commonly to be found in the houses. It is about half an inch long, and hairy, of various colours, ranging from dull grey to silver. It feeds upon flies, and when one is so unfortunate as to engage the attentions of this spider the latter will jump upon him, sometimes with a short run or leap extending to as much as sixteen inches.

The mygale or bird-catching spider is a large and hairy species which lives in holes in the earth. Its spread of limb is enormous, covering a space of about seven inches. It has very strong fangs, and its bite is very poisonous. As the name implies, it preys on small birds, moths, and butterflies. It is remarkably quick in its jumping movements, rendering its capture difficult.

When travelling through the bush I have often seen fights between the mygale and a blue hornet, in many cases lasting quite half an hour. The spider when attacked would roll itself into a ball, lying upon its back with legs uppermost; the hornet would then fly in circles just over the spider and at short intervals would allow its body to drop and stab at the spider with its sting, never leaving the mygale until it was dead, when the hornet would secure it with two of his legs and fly away carrying off the hairy monster. The hornet is about two inches in length, with a greenish black velvety body and wings; it also attacks other kinds of spiders, the scorpion, and some assert even small varieties of snakes.

Some of the most wonderful and certainly the prettiest spiders in the universe must be those that inhabit the Amazon regions. Species may be seen in every sheltered place having very long legs of bright metallic colours, sometimes with bodies of rich blue, scarlet, silver, gold, and bronze tints.

Another extremely common insect is the jigger flea, or chigoe. It prevails everywhere, but is most prolific where pigs are reared and are allowed to run loose in the villages or round the houses, where they are accustomed to live in the dry mud and dust at the base of the walls. This dust at times becomes so thoroughly alive with them that even though one is well-shod it is almost a certainty that one or more will find their way to the skin or underneath the nails of the toes. Here they burrow and lay their eggs which, when they attain maturity, cause a whitish swelling about the size of a pea. The eggs are enclosed in a casing which is its extended body and must be removed whole, as if any eggs remain they mature under the skin and owing to their reproduction will consume large portions of the body they attack.

When the eggs are removed it is advisable to cauterize the wound, otherwise a very serious inflammation may result, and cases are even known of death occurring.

The river water is said to be a fruitful source of infection; the natives in consequence never wet their feet after the removal of this insect. When it first enters the skin it causes a slight irritation, and if one's attention is drawn thereto the jigger may easily be noticed as a small black speck, in which state it is neither difficult nor very painful to remove.

This insect is the one referred to in an earlier chapter of the book as making the pigs which are allowed to roam about the streets of Iquitos and other places so unsightly, due to their presence literally in hundreds in the animal's body which they make their home.

The author knew one poor man who deserted his ship and slept while under the influence of liquor close to a bakery, the vicinity of which was much frequented by pigs. In a few days this man was troubled with irritations caused by the presence of the jigger, but did not know the reason. After wandering about the district for a week or two his condition was so terrible that he had to be admitted to the hospital, and such a hold had the insects got in his system that he lay several months in a very shocking state before he was considered free of them. The doctor who attended him informed me that upon this man's admittance hundreds were taken out of his skin, even to the interior of his nostrils, ears, etc.

I have already referred in an earlier portion of the book to such pests as the mosquito, sand-fly, and the motuca, but there are others which in their effects are more to be feared. One of the most prominent of these is a large brown reddish fly which, when piercing the skin of cattle, pigs, or dogs, and even man himself, deposits an egg which matures into a large grub, and which eventually attains a length of about an inch. Before the grub can be extracted it must be allowed to attain maturity, and it is a common thing to see a dog with three or more lumps as large as an ordinary man's fist, each containing one of these grubs.

This fly is sometimes confounded with the bot (*Œs tridæ*); it is a kind of tabana, which deposits its eggs mostly in cattle, and another variety of which is *Œs tridæ hominus*, which attacks only humans. Both these flies deposit a grub smaller than the one mentioned, but of a much more hirsute character.

The Indians in some rivers suffer greatly from the attacks of this particular fly or mosquito, an effect which is referred to by Wallace, and must have been known to Bates. The grub is covered with long bristly hairs, which adhere to the walls of the tumour caused by its presence. Irrespective of the size of this pest, its extraction is an extremely painful operation. The writer on several occasions has taken them out of the skin of his dogs. They do not break the skin until almost matured, when, apart from the swelling caused by them, their presence may be noted by their peculiarly hard brown heads.

Wasps and bees sometimes make a day's journey through the bush an exceedingly unpleasant adventure. One particularly small yellow species builds a round nest of clay on the under leaves of small, thick bushes, often very close to the ground, and it is an experience to remember when one happens to disturb their nest, as they will attack the traveller literally in hundreds, causing him in many cases to throw away his gun, or anything else he may be carrying, in order to facilitate his progress through the bush to escape them.

Another species build their nests high up in the branches of very large trees. The nests are conical in form, having the appearance of a bell hanging from the branch. The structure of the nest when complete is very like papier mâché. The entrance to the nest is at the bottom, and this particular species of wasp appears to make honey.

Another variety, ranging to one and one and a half inches in length, with elongated bodies, may be seen almost daily on the walls or on the beams of a house, constructing a peculiar nest of clay. This hornet makes a small cell, in which it deposits a fly and, at the same time, an egg. The chamber is then sealed and the process is continued until the nest contains four or five cells. The sting from this species is extremely painful.

Bees, too, of many varieties, mostly stingless, are common, but although they are stingless the taking of the honey from their combs is a most difficult operation, as no matter how one may be protected they will enter the ears and nostrils, and even penetrate under one's head covering, in order to get at the hair, which they cut into small pieces, and half an hour with these little terrors is quite sufficient for them to destroy one's hair or beard.

Of the stingless varieties, one of the best known is a large species with a velvety golden brown body, black head and legs. This is nearly always found in the higher branches of the massaranduba. Although each hive produces from two to five gallons of honey, it is rarely obtained, owing to the height and thickness of the tree.

Toads are often encountered when walking through the bush, most of them being covered with horny protuberances sometimes of the same colour as the toad itself, others of lighter shades and forming peculiar patterns. Large and exceedingly ugly specimens are continually to be met with, attaining a height when squat of four or even five inches. The dogs of the Indians, owing to the fact that they are almost always kept in a half-starved state in order to make them hunt better, have been known to eat some of these species of toads, resulting in foaming at the mouth and eventual madness.

Frogs are common everywhere. In some of the low-lying swampy grounds many varieties, mainly of green and yellow colours, can be found, and the long-limbed tree frog is exceedingly common.

The writer on one occasion, while going through the bush in the earlier months after his arrival in the country, went to great trouble in order to locate a croaking noise in the bush which he thought was made by one of the varieties of mutum, but upon arriving at the base of a tree where the noise appeared to come from, he found it literally alive with this species of frog.

Ground beetles are very rarely found, most of them appearing to live above the ground, on trees and shrubs. Of the larger varieties there are the Hercules, the stag, from three to five inches in length, and the large horny proboscis, much used by Brazilian women as an ornament. Another is the asserrador, the male of which also has a large jet-like horn which is used as a trinket. These are probably varieties which produce the grub so much favoured by the Indians as an article of food. This grub sometimes attains a length of from four to five inches. In colour, it is white with a small black head. Its body attains a thickness about equal to one's little finger. It is often eaten in its raw state by both the Indians and whites, although generally fried in its own fat until crisp, when it is said to taste not unlike refined cocoanut oil.

Locusts, too, are found almost everywhere. There are many varieties, most of them having the outer wings and exposed parts of the body of a bright green shade, often with pretty red markings. The inner wings, however, range in shades from green to all tints of purple, and are always the colour of the soft parts of the body or abdomen.

Not unlike the locusts are the mantis or praying insects. They are so called from their habit of elevating their two forelegs and bending them up, which makes them appear to be in the act of prayer. They are mostly green in colour with long bodies and large heads. Their forelegs are furnished with a kind of saw, with which they can inflict a small but very painful wound. Like the locust, their thin underwings are of various shades.

Others of the same species look like small leaves, even their legs having the appearance of curled-up or twisted foliage, while in variety they can hardly be distinguished from a thin piece of dry, rotten twig, and it is only upon picking up one of these insects that one is able to notice they have legs and are animate.

Scorpions and centipedes are others of the many pests which seem to have been placed in the bush for the inconvenience of man. The first-named is too well known to need describing. The South American species are only found in the forests and old and abandoned huts or under dried palm leaves. They are of a dirty grey colour and attain a length of two and a half inches from the tip of the tail, where it is furnished with an exceedingly painful sting.

The centipede is often a matter of much inconvenience and pain when one is obliged to pass a night in the bush. It will sometimes make its way through the mosquito net or bed covering, and wherever it touches the skin leaves an ugly red mark. Its bite is very painful, and its effect may be felt for many hours.

Bats of many kinds are exceedingly common, one in particular, sometimes called the vampire, being most partial to blood. Where cattle are kept, the ravages caused by the bites of this mammal are extremely serious, as the blood trickling down from the wound and becoming congealed attracts a large fly that lays its eggs in the region of the wound. These very quickly become grubs, which burrowing under the skin will cause a large hollow tumour, the core of which is formed by a living mass of the grubs. When neglected this sore attains very large proportions, and if it should happen to be in the region of the horns or in any place close to a vital spot quickly results in the death of the animal.

The method of curing is to scoop the grubs out with a small stick or similar article and pack the hole with roughly cut tobacco mixed with salt and soot.

The vampire (so called) will not enter a room where a light is kept burning, and when one is obliged during journeys on the river to sleep on the sand-banks or other places unprotected by a mosquito net and without a light it is a common occurrence to find one's toes or other exposed parts of the body covered with blood from the bite of this pest. Although its teeth are very sharp and shaped like lancets it is said that one does not feel the incision, as it fans with its wings that part of the body which is receiving its attention, and by keeping the part cool lessens the sense of pain.

CHAPTER XX

NATURAL HISTORY

VEGETATION

THE valley of the Amazon is not yet known to the commercial world by minerals of any value, though the rivers in the more remote districts contain gold in some quantity. In certain parts of the Putumayo and its tributaries the existence of gold and copper, and even some iron, is apparent to the eye ; coal, although not workable, is found close to Iquitos, and rivers like the Tamaya and the small mountain streams, which run down the slopes of the Jurua watershed, are certainly rich in precious metals.

Huge fortunes must await those who lay bare some of the treasures which Nature has stored in profusion from time immemorial, and which, passing through all the geological formations, are as yet untouched. The pickaxe, as yet, has struck very little into the earth of this marvellous and wonderful country, yet, even little as it has penetrated, unmistakable signs reveal the presence of minerals, metals, precious stones, and coal almost throughout the whole of the Amazon River system, whilst for many years, certainly fifty, placer mining has been carried on close to the mouth of the River Napo, although at very irregular intervals.

A gold-mining concern was formed in Iquitos not many years ago by local men, to work the gold which it is positively known is to be found in the River Santiago, but it was very unfortunate from its inception. The actual miners were massacred by the savages, not a single survivor being left out of sixty men to tell the tale.

Baron de Sant Anna Nery, referring to the River Madeira, in his report of the Amazon Commission for the Brazilian Exhibition in Rio de Janeiro, after mentioning the discoveries of precious metals in other parts of Brazil, says that gold and crystalline stones have been found close to the cataract at Riberao; yet to-day the railway line passes within a few hundred yards of it, and there is a railway station in sight of the fall itself. It is the seat of administration of a large rubber firm, and blasting operations are carried on almost daily at the quarries of the railway company, who use the fine granite for the ballasting of the track.

So little heed is paid in Brazil and the surrounding republics to matters other than those connected with rubber that many of the mineral riches which only await the observant, practical eye remain unnoticed. According to Severiano de Fonseca, "The rocks in these cataracts (River Madeira) are of plutonic formation, and reveal at first sight their volcanic origin, modified perchance by metamorphism. Some of them appear to be difficult to class on account of the uncertainty of the signs they present; others, on the other hand, offer a mineralogical facies which removes all doubt. The great slabs of trachytic stone, nearly smooth and of the colour of iron, or the shiny black of tar, are found in many places in layers of more or less undulating and rounded edges; one would suppose they were formed from matter in a state of fusion flowing in broad streams and covering wide tracts, and then cooling before the last slabs appeared at the place occupied by the first. Here and there spring up great rocks, some prismatic, others rounded, now in the form of dykes of diorite and elvan, now as detached blocks. Some are split in the middle by a single crack, which sometimes measures more than a fathom in width. Elsewhere are encountered huge excavations (cauldrons), perfectly round holes hollowed out in the rock by the friction of rolling flints."

What a promise of wealth the Amazon presents, and yet no one seems to have made any serious attempt at taking advantage of her mineral riches, due partly to the fear which the country instils in the hearts of brave men, owing to tales of its pestilences, dangers, inaccessibility, and to a want of knowledge of its character; for the old style of pioneer, who is not afraid of inconveniences and a certain amount of risk among its peoples, there are great opportunities, while for a geologist it is a perfect paradise.

It is lamentable that so much capital has been sunk in the rubber industry, which has cost so many hundreds of thousands of lives and so much suffering, when a fraction of what has been expended if applied to the development of the country's mineral resources would have made it one of the leading countries in the world.

Not only is the country rich in minerals, metals, and precious stones, but I believe I am justified in declaring it to be the possessor of the greatest vegetable riches of any region in the world. Lopez Goncalvez, writing in *O Amazon*, says: "Everything pertaining to flora is to be found in these vast dominions, from monstrous trees, used for building and cabinet-making, to spices, aromatic herbs, alimentary products, plants which produce medicinal and oily substances, woods used for dyeing, vegetable ivory, rich textile fibres, resins, gums, balsam, and essences; and what a variety of fruits! what an unlimited store hanging from the trees, defying the appetite of the traveller. . . . From the spot chosen for a house one will see on all sides enormous trees useful for carpentry."

With little labour roots and seeds bud, Indian corn, coffee, sugar cane, tobacco, and cocoa can be produced, while the abundant tropical fruits can be made to help the planter by maintaining and nourishing him until he can plant on a larger scale and contribute towards his commercial business, in this manner adding to his own wealth and improving local trade.

The number of trees known to the river dwellers as being useful for purposes of construction is very large, and not all of them are classified by botanists. Among the better-known are the massaranduba prieta (*Mimusops balata*), acapú (*Andira ambletti*), bacury (*Platonia insignis*), piqui or piquia (*Caryocar Braziliensis*), pau ferro, "iron wood" (*Swastria tormentosa*), sucupira (*Bowdichia virgilioides*), sapucaia (*Lecythis ollaria*), and cedar (*Cedrela odorata*).

Massaranduba prieta is also used in the making of paddles, and is a useful timber for shipbuilding. It has been tried in local railway construction as sleepers, but does not appear to be quite suitable; nor do any of the local woods, and for this reason sleepers have to be imported at great cost. The massaranduba tree grows to a height of from twenty to twenty-five metres, with a circumference of from one to three metres.

Acapú is mostly used as flooring and beams. It is a very hard, brittle wood, of which there are black, white, yellow, and spotted varieties, and a common one called acapu-y not so resistant.

Bacury is a very resistant wood of a greyish colour and, alternated with woods of other colours, it is much used as flooring in good houses in Manaos and Para. It produces a variety of rubber and its fruit is very tasty. It grows to a height of about twenty-five metres, and in diameter from one to two metres.

Piqui or piquia grows to a height of twelve metres, and in diameter from one to two metres. Its wood is very hard and yellow in colour, and immense groves of this tree may be found in the Putumayo and district, where the Indians have cultivated it for its fruit, which is thick-skinned and contains an edible oily pulp greatly liked by them, and considered very nourishing food; although it has a peculiar sweetish resinous flavour it is, nevertheless, very palatable. While in the Putumayo region I ate great quantities of it and found it very wholesome.

The pau ferro is greatly used for making walking-sticks, besides being used as "caybros" or thatch poles in buildings. It grows to a height of from fifteen to eighteen metres and in diameter about one.

Sucupira, of which there are white and yellow varieties, is put to similar uses as massaranduba, as is also the sapucaia, which has other properties. This yields a tow, which is found between the pith and the bark, and which is much used for caulking and produces a blue dye used in the dyeing of cotton. The nut is a valuable drug and grows in a very hard and thick hermetically sealed shell or pod of a green and yellow colour.

Cedar, also found in some parts of Brazil, is rarely cut down, but taken from the river as it floats on the surface, brought down by the floods which uproot it easily owing to its roots being mostly on the surface of the ground. There are several colours and qualities, mostly white, brown, and yellow, but the red one is the best of them all. The tree grows to a height of thirty metres and two or three in diameter. The timber is much used for flooring, doors, walls, laths, ceilings, shop-fittings, etc., and when well worked and polished is highly decorative.

Other trees used for building purposes are ipé (*Tecoma chrysantha*), itauba (*Acrodiclidium itauba*), guariuba (*Galipea*), and umiry (*Humirium floribundum*).

Ipé grows to a height of twelve metres, guariuba ten metres, itauba (a very hard wood used as piles as it resists the action of damp earth and rarely rots when interred) grows to about twenty, and umiry to about fifteen metres. From the last named a highly perfumed clear balsam of a yellowish tint is obtained, which is used for cuts and wounds exactly in the same way as Peruvian balsam.

Besides all those above enumerated are others known to me by their local and guarani names. They are greatly used and appreciated in the interior. I append a list with their average measurements:—

Mororo preto	20 metres
Mororo-y	20 „
Acaricoara	6–10 „
Ajarana	
Ananará	
Bacupari	
Cumati	
Ipiúba	
Jutahy	
Marajúba	
Marapáuba	
Muirapyranga	
Muraquitaia	
Tamacoaré	
Inga-y	5 „
Pau-raniha	18 „

Casca fina	10 metres
Sacopema	15 ,,
Pau amarello	9 ,,
Cacau-rana	9 ,,
Canella de veado	6 ,,
Muricy-preto	15 ,,
Carapana-uba	14 ,,
Cacau-vermelho	10 ,,
Invereira amarella	7 ,,
Ingarana	5 ,,
Macaca-uba	20 ,,
Inga-xixica	5 ,,
Jutahy póróroca	10 ,,
Acary-Coara	17 ,,
Aritu (nectandra sp.)	16 ,,
Copiúba	15 ,,

This last wood, according to Rebouças, is of the family caesalpinaceas (*Copacifera sp.*), while others class it as *Nectandra sp.* It has medicinal properties, and exudes a resin also used in medicine. The fruit of jutahy póróroca is much appreciated by the Indians, and forms one of their staple articles of food.

All the above woods are commonly used in building construction, besides having the special qualities already mentioned, but though many of them are used in cabinet-making and other fine work the following woods are especially used.

Louro (of the family of *Lauraceas*), found in swampy lands in many qualities, such as the common yellow, black, white, grey, odoriferous cedar, beech, and tachi.

There is abundance of jacarandá (mahogany) of various kinds, banana or white (*Swartzia flemingii*, *Platypodium elegans*, etc.), which grow to a height of twelve metres;

cabiúna (*Dalbergia nigra*), eipó (*Machœrium leucapterium*), jacandará-tan, jacarandá piranga (*Machœrium violaceum antfirmum*), and puitan; muiracoatiara (*Centralobium sp.*), muira-piranga, muirapenima, pau setim (*Aspidosperma sp.*), pau violeta, pau santo, pau roxo, pau preciosa, the bark and seeds of which are much used in medicine, pau milato, also cut down, is used as fuel, saboarana, a very pretty black wood, pau rosa, prettily marked from a yellow centre with rose-coloured lines, guajacana, imburana, a tree which grows to eighteen metres, corasaõ de negro, ten metres, and guajará, genipapo (*Genipa Braziliensis*), the fruit of which makes a medicinal beverage, cajaseiro (*Spondia dulcis*), inga-rana (*Inga sp.*), andira-uixi (*Andira sp.*), tucuman preto, jutahy-rana (*Hymenœa sp.*), muricy (*Cersonima verbascifalia*), giboia, guajara roxo, inhare, pau cruz, pau cor de laranja, chibuhy, jaboty pé jarana, goiaba de anta, bacaba-y, pau de S. Salvador; inajá, inaj-yá, pataúa, pretty palm woods put to a variety of uses, such as the making of lances, walking-sticks, etc., pau Brazil, or ibirapitinga, and pau campeche (*Hematoxylon campechiamum*). The latter is also a useful dye wood.

There is thus a long list of timbers used in building construction, railway work, shipbuilding, carpentry, and cabinet making, some of which are used in medicine, but there is still a long list of trees, roots, and shrubs, etc., which are of little or no value as timber, but of immense value in medicinal and in commercial properties, owing to the presence of resin and oil.

Among the first-named we have the abatua. This is the root of a very hard and twisted liana (*Cœculus platyphylla*), of a dark-coloured skin or bark. The woody portion is a peculiar greyish yellow and has a very bitter taste. It has diuretic properties, is a febrifuge, and is a powerful enmenagogue. It contains fecula and potass, and is valuable in the treatment of dropsy and orchites. Caferana (*Tachia guianensis*) is a very strong tonic, and is also a febrifuge. It has a bitter taste similar to quassia, and the root which is the medicinal portion is a thin branchy white one. Others are gapuy, the root of a shrub of the same name which, bruised and boiled in order to extract its starch, is, when diluted in a little water, a remedy in ophthalmia. Moirapirama is used by boiling the root and the infusion is useful in cases of local paralysis. Infusions of the root of the Marupá-miry are good in attacks of diarrhœa. Ipecacuanha, the uses of which are too well known to be mentioned here, as is the case with sarsaparilla, which is common almost everywhere.

From the following the resins are extracted, and are useful in medicine :—

Anani and cunanú-icica are useful as cures for headache, the former in vapour form ; icica-icicaribamolle and almecega are stimulants and a suppurative plaster is made by mixing "Creu Cranco" with the oils of andiruba and carapa.

The oils extracted from the Amazon trees are the following : copaihiba, the medicinal value of which is well known ; sassafras, castor oil, tamaquaré, for skin diseases and rheumatism, and tucum, caia caiaué (*Elexis melanococca*), jussare (*Euterpeoleracea*), javary, and murumurú. Among the saps which are extracted from the numerous trees and fruits are to be found : the sucuúba (*Pulmeira phagedencia*), a strong purgative and vermifuge, used successfully in cases of rheumatism, ulcers, and warts, being applied externally ; the sorva (*Collophora utilis*) is also a strong vermifuge, and is a good cement for joining wood and stone ; ucuúba, from the same tree is extensively used for ulcers in the mouth and throat; the quaxinguba is also a strong vermifuge and depurative, and is much used by seringueros after a long period in the rubber forests. Assacú, a deadly poison, is much sought after by Brazilian doctors, who use it in the cure of loathsome skin diseases, such as various forms of leprosy, eczema, and even scurvy; the uapuy is used in ophthalmic cases, amapá for lacerations, ulcers, and wounds, turury as a plaster, jacaré-uba for rheumatism, jatataca for wounds and as liniment for internal pains, and gamelleira (*Ficus doliaria*) is a vermifuge.

Of the barks and seeds used in medicine we have the following: mururé, the juice of the bark being a commonly used blood purifier; marupuy, to relieve attacks of vomiting and dysentery; quina (*Cuichona*), from which we get quinine or Peruvian bark as it was originally known; paricá and angico are strong resolutives; contraherva (*Dorstenia Braziliensis*) is an excellent febrifuge; buranhem (*Chryso-phyllum buranhem*) is used in the bath for the cure of erysipelas, and the extract for chronic catarrh, diarrhœa, and blennorrhage, while used externally it is a remedy for ulcers and inflammatory ophthalmia; quassia (*Quassia amara*) is a tonic and stomach regulator, while after the seeds of the pajurá (*Pleragina*) have been scraped to a powder and pulverized with the seeds of the pau de dartos, the resultant mixture is added to a little vinegar and used as an astringent in skin diseases.

Leaves used in medicine are also plentiful, among the most common being those of the maracan, which used as an infusion are good in rheumatic and constitutional maladies, while the dye produced from the acauan caá (*Guaco*) is also used against rheumatism, and in snake and poisonous insects' bites and stings.

Perfumes are obtained from the piripirioca and cipó cheiroso, the first named of which is exquisite, and is supposed to have aphrodisiacal properties, while the second has a very pungent perfume which is hard to conceal.

In industrial pursuits we find the following used: jutaicica and jatobá for varnishing pottery, and the cannaraicica is used as bitumen, but these of great industrial value are not sufficiently well known. Among the better known vegetable products we find the tonquin bean (cumarú), vanilla, which needs no describing; castanha, the oil of which is used in the making of emollients, and as a dressing for the hair; patahuá and bacaba, from which oil is extracted for cleaning tools and firearms, also, like olive oil, as food; the seed of the rubber tree when crushed gives off a good illuminating oil; macucú, an extract from the fruit of the tree of the same name, used in dyeing and painting the calabashes so much used in the rivers as drinking vessels; the cujumary, highly aromatic, ginger, cloves, nutmeg, and cinnamon; puchury (*Nectandra puchury*), a bean from which an aromatic and piquant powder is made, much used for dyspepsia and diarrhœa. Cipó cururú and cipo guyra are strong purgatives, the former being administered as an infusion of the stalk and the latter of the leaves.

Fruits are abundant in the forest, growing wild without any care or attempt at improving them by cultivation, among the most common being the cupu-ussú, bacury, goiaba, piqui, sorva, mangoba, burity, bacaba, assahy, anajá, cubio, ingá, popunha, tucuman, genipapo, and last but not least, the maracajá, the very dainty and tasty fruit of the passion flowers. Among the fruits which we find under a certain amount of cultivation are pineapples, abacate or alligator pear, and the bread fruit.

Little attention has been paid to cultivation in the

Amazon Valley, yet almost everything will grow well there, the extent of present efforts being the planting of a little mandioc, etc., for making farina (which I have already described), beans, Indian corn, and rice, but it does not produce anything like enough for purely local needs, and a big import trade is done, while with a little more energy they could be grown in quantities which would effectively obviate this, thereby reducing the cost of living and materially aiding industry. But it is impossible to convince the people of this, nor will the traders in Manaos, Iquitos, and Pará grant facilities, as they desire nothing more than rubber.

Occasionally one meets with small plantations of igname or cora, a large creeper, the root of which is a tuber not unlike the yam of the Africans in taste and appearance. There is also another fruit or vegetable which produces arrowroot. Cocoa or cacao does well in suitable places, also coffee, sugar-cane, and tobacco. The coca is favoured by the Indians, who chew it as already described. The first-named is very little cultivated; sugar-cane is only grown close to large towns or villages, except by planters like the American, Mr. Stone, at Itacoatiara, of whom there are not more than three in the Amazon Valley. Sugar-cane is used in the distilling of alcohol and aguardiente, and tobacco for personal use, the surplus only being sold.

A large trade is done in the district of Para in an Indian product called guaraná (*Paullinia sorbilis*), which is used in the British pharmacopœia. It is made from the fruit of the plant, which is a creeper of the *Sapindaceous* family, and grows in bunches. The Indians remove the exterior after it has been well soaked in water, the seeds are extracted and then dried in the sun. They are then crushed to a powder, water is added to form a paste, which is worked up into figures of animals, fruits, birds, etc., and then placed over a smoky fire and cured. Some of the figures are very well made, and show originality on the part of the Indians. Guaraná, when scraped to a powder, is mixed with water or tea, and makes a very refreshing drink, but its excessive use will ruin the digestive and nervous system, causing hysteria. The most valuable kind of guaraná is that which when made up contains the fewest air-holes, and the black variety is thought to be better than the yellow. This article is produced only in the district of Maues, inhabited by the Indians of that name, and is its only revenue. Its price is very varied, but it rarely is sold at less than two shillings per pound in Pará.

Of textile fibres the Amazon Valley has many, such as piassaba (*Attalea funifera*), tucum (*Astrocarym tucuma*), caraná (*Cromelia sagenaria*), embira (*Xilopia funifera*), mirity (*Mauritia flexuosa*), timbu-assú, estopa, algodoim, tururi (*Sterculia inviva*), naissima (*Urena labata*), and many others.

Piassaba is used for brooms, brushes, rope-making, hawsers, etc.; tucum made into twine by the Indians, who twist it by laying it on the bare skin above the knees and passing the hands smartly backwards and forwards; from carauá, a kind of cotton is produced which is very tough and is used as cords for stringed instruments. The timbu-assú is a creeper used to make a thread and cloth not unlike cotton fabrics; estopa, from a nut tree, is used for caulking boats, floors, and in boat and ship building generally.

The tobacco produced in the Amazon Valley is of very good quality, but it is allowed to grow in the open without any particular attention. If it were cultivated in the same manner as in the better-known tobacco-growing countries, it might be much improved and become a very valuable addition to the resources of the region. Its leaf is large and very flexible, and when made up as cigars, cigarettes, or cut up for the pipe, it gives a pretty blue smoke of good aroma, but it is very strong and easily causes the smoker to become dizzy. One of the best-known blends is that known as "acara," of a deep blackish colour.

Mention has been made of some of the woods, barks, plants, etc., which are used as dyes, but not of that of the tatajuba (*Maclura tinctoria*), from which an excellent bright yellow dye is extracted; the macacú produces a dark red dye; the acari-cuara, a pale green olive dye, made from the skins of the fruit; mangué vermelho and massaranduba are used in tanning hides; and the barbitimão produces a very deep red dye, while it has astringent properties. The yarina or vegetable ivory is the nut of a pretty palm or tree fern (*Elephantusa macrocarpa*), and by some classified as *Phitelephas macrocarpa*. The nut is similar in form to a cocoanut, but is very small, being about one inch in diameter. It, however, unlike the cocoanut proper, has a smooth, hard, yellowish coloured shell. The nuts are found in fours inside a large prickly outer casing or fruit, the inside skin of which is edible. The kernel is of a yellow tint, and when hardened can be used for small objects exactly in the same manner as animal ivory. Other peculiar trees are those known by the Peruvians as achiote (*Bixa orellana*) and huitoc (*Genipapo Braziliensis*), the urucueira and genipapo of the Brazilians. The fruit of the first-named is a yellowish conical fruit not unlike the end of a thistle and about the same size. It contains a number of small, stony seeds, which are covered with a bright red paint or dye; these are used for colouring cooked foods, and in medicine are said to be an excellent remedy in lung diseases. The dye produced from the seeds is fast, resisting syrups and acids. It is much used by the Indians for painting and tattooing their bodies, and is said to be useful in preventing the bites of the sand-fly. The second-named is a round, dark, green-skinned fruit, and its interior is a whitish colour. Apart from its medicinal properties, which have already been mentioned, it is much used by dwellers in the forest and rivers (not necessarily Indians), as it effectively lessens the attacks of the sand-fly and mosquito. The fruit is cut and the inside pulp is passed over the hands and face, or other exposed parts of the body, when its juice slowly turns into the colour of writing ink. It resists the action of soap and water, but the dye is gradually absorbed by the skin, which in the course of four to six days peels off, leaving a perfectly new clear one. The writer has used it often when likely to arrive at a fairly civilized place, to rid his hands and face of the disfiguring black spots of congealed blood caused by the sand-flies. It is also used by the Indians very extensively in tattooing, principally on the eyebrows and eyelids to replace the fine hairs which they remove; also by the women in their method of tattooing which does not make their nakedness so palpable, and which was explained in the chapter on the Putumayo Indians.

While still on the subject of vegetable resources of the Amazon Valley forests, there occur to me two other plants, one of which is very little known, viz. the diamba, a very small leaf which is used as tobacco, but in smoking it the user allows its fumes to pass through water in a particular kind of pipe which has a glass bulb containing it. Its effects are as violent as those of opium, and it is much sought after by the Orientals in the region, who use it in place of that drug, as the heavy duty imposed upon opium makes its purchase almost prohibitive.

Before concluding, I must not omit to mention the vegetable poison of the Indians known as "curare," a very violent one and of extraordinary properties. It is extracted from the bark of a thick vine, the urary, which is very bitter to the taste and is, I find, of the genus *Strychnos toxifera*. The Indians use it in warfare and in hunting, by painting the points of their arrows, spears, and darts, and in the pits dug by them for the trapping of every kind of animal. In the Putumayo and similar regions, when they desire to injure their enemies, splinters of sharpened palm wood dipped in this poison are placed in paths which are likely to be frequented by those they desire to injure, a very real danger to the unwary, as no one uses foot protection in the forests, it being almost impossible or at least very difficult to travel while shod.

A description of the poison and its effects, with the mode of preparation, was given by the late Dr. Francisco da Silva Castro, and was published in the *Gazeta Medica de Bahia*, Nos. 39 and 46, in 1868, as follows :–

"The bark of the vine is scraped with a knife ; these scrapings or filaments are then pounded with a pestle, and afterwards soaked in a small quantity of water for some days. It is then pressed in a tytiti or native press, shaped like an elastic sleeve made of the grass of the uarumá or guarumá ; then the liquid is put through a rough sieve called urupema, also made of the same grass, or through a kind of funnel made of leaves, through which the yellow liquid slowly filters. It is then placed in the sun so that the remaining water may evaporate, leaving a sediment. This is afterwards heated and becomes of a glutinous consistency, which solidifies when allowed to cool. Prepared in this manner it will last for years, and is usually stored in small glazed pots or in small calabashes (*Crescentia* *cujete*). When required for use the Indians moisten it and dip the points of their arrows in it to use against their foes. These are used with wonderful precision for long distances with their bows. The effect of this poison is so rapid that barely has the poisoned arrow, or whatever is the instrument used, touched the body of the animal and drawn blood when it is dead without the slightest apparent pain or agony. For this poison to act so promptly it is apparent that it is not circulated by the blood or absorbing agency to cause death so suddenly, therefore it is not by means of the circulation that we must look for the explanation of this, but another medium, i.e. the nerve fluid, which flows through the nerves, is the real conductor of the poison, and the proof that it is not through the circulation, and consequently not absorbed by the system, is that the meat of animals so killed is eaten raw by other animals with impunity. On the Rio Negro and Orinoco hunting and fishing are usually done with this poison by using their arrows soaked in it, and thrown either with a bow or blowpipe (*Larabatana*), and it is said that the meat is more delicate and tasty when obtained in this manner."

Another very common aid to man while living in the Amazonian forests are the grasses and leaves which take the place of beverages such as tea. These are the leaf of a shrub called cidreira, of a peculiarly acid taste not unlike citron, and another, the leaf of a grass known in Brazil as capim santo, or saints' grass, and in Peru and other places as yerba louisa.

In taste it is very like lemon, and the leaves, either green or dry, when infused, make a very refreshing tea, which is said to be most beneficial in stomach troubles.

This chapter does not by any means enumerate all the inexhaustible vegetable resources of the Amazon region, many of which will not become known until such men as Bates, Wallace, and others are prepared to dedicate many years of their lives to the discovery and classification of unknown life in the Amazon forests and jungles.

CHAPTER XXI

THE AMAZON PALM TREES

ONE of the first things to strike the attention of the observant traveller when navigating the Amazon is the innumerable varieties of beautiful palm trees. In the majority of cases the Amazon palm trees are apt to be passed unnoticed by the ordinary commercial or other traveller uninterested in the wonders of nature, as more probably his attention is drawn to the many trees of variegated foliage and blooms.

The palm trees of the Amazon lose greatly by their natural surroundings in the forests, but when seen in the public gardens of cities their gracefulness is charming.

I have been in many places where royal palms and travellers' palms would cause almost any passer-by to stay a moment and admire them. Poets have sung the praises of date palms and groves of the cocoanut, but hidden away in the South American forests palms of every shape and size may be found, ranging from a few feet high to sometimes more than one hundred. Some, checked in their growth by other trees in close proximity, assume curiously bent and twisted shapes before their crowns can dominate their neighbours. In the forests themselves, beautiful small palms are encountered everywhere, some never attaining a height of above eight feet. The swamps are always known by the great abundance of mirity, with their large fan-shaped leaves and scarlet clusters of fruit.

The mirity (*Mauritia flexiosa*) is one of the commonest and is the largest of the Amazonian palm trees. In height it attains as much as one hundred feet, and in diameter about three feet. The outer shell is extremely hard, and in felling a single tree sometimes many axes are broken. The tree is notably slimy, and from its pores a kind of resin or gum exudes, which coagulates, forming small balls or drops. The inner bark, too, is almost always the home of grubs of the Hercules and assirador beetles, so greatly sought after by the Indians. Owing to the difficulty experienced in felling this tree it is rarely used commercially.

The fruit of the mirity grows in huge clusters, weighing at times more than 250 pounds avoirdupois. Each fruit is about the size of a large plum, and is covered with small red scales which, when the fruit is ripe, can be scraped off. The part eaten is a pale yellow mass found between the outer scales and the kernel, which is a very large one, the edible portion of each fruit being very slight. In order to get the utmost possible use out of the fruit the natives put large quantities of them in water which has been slightly heated in the sun, and they are allowed to remain undisturbed for several hours. The water is then poured off, and the nuts pounded with sticks or rubbed between the hands. The kernels are then taken out and placed to one side in the sun. The resultant mass of yellow matter, mixed with the small red outer scales, is then put into pots and left to ferment, which generally happens in the course of about three days. When required to be used, water is added, and the yellow mass is turned into solution. This is passed through rough sieves made of grass, thus producing a very nourishing beverage, although perhaps rather intoxicating. Its taste is very agreeable, being of an oily acid flavour. The nuts are in appearance very much like an elongated red golf ball, and when baked and ground by the Indian women are used as abortives.

The remaining palms are none of them of very great thickness, though rising to great heights. The thickest of them is the barigudo, or tarapoto (*Iriartea ventricosa*). The distended part of this palm is much used by caucheros and others as a means of making a rough canoe for the crossing of rivers, lakes, etc., in emergencies. One of these canoes will accommodate two men quite long enough to enable them to cross the rivers at their widest parts.

The young shoots are greatly eaten as food and are slightly superior in taste to the other varieties. The fruits are rarely eaten by the natives, as it is said they are very indigestible and cause severe stomachic pains. Both this tree and another of the same variety, but without the distended portion, are remarkable for their roots. These grow above the ground, and increase in number and height from the ground with the age of the tree. They are covered with sharp, horny thorns, and act as supports to the tree. The wood when cut into strips is much used in some districts in making the floors, walls, and ceilings of rough structures.

Another very prominent palm is the ubussú (*Manicoria saccifera*), which grows to a height of more than one hundred feet. It is remarkable for its huge leaves, which attain a length of twenty-five feet and six feet in width. Its crown resembles at some distance a gigantic shuttlecock, whilst its serrated leaves resemble huge feathers.

The tucumá palm (*Astrocaryum*) provides such birds as macaws and toucans with the berries which form part of their food. The fruit is tremendously hard, yet toucans and parrots seem to have no difficulty in digesting it.

The bacaba is a smaller palm (*Anocarpus bacaba*) also with very pretty fern-like leaves. Its stem rarely attains three inches in diameter, and in height not more than fifty feet. Its fruit is much esteemed in the making of a very palatable drink, which has the appearance and density of cocoa. The fruits are about the size, shape, and colour of olives. The thin trunks are used for rough buildings and cut into lengths as rollers for the passing of canoes, launches, or other heavy weights over rough ground.

The assayi (*Euterpes oloracea*) is similar in appearance, but much higher. The thin, rough stems of this really beautiful palm grow to a great height. There are several species, all of which produce a fruit much sought after at certain seasons. The fruits grow in large clusters close to the crown, and in appearance and size are like damsons. They are covered with a thin purplish shell, between which and the nut-like kernel is a thin, violet-coloured, fleshy substance. The fruits are put into water which has been slightly warmed, in order to soften the edible matter. They are then rubbed together until only the kernel remains. These are thrown away and the residue, of a pretty violet colour, is mixed with sugar, water, and farina, when it makes an excellent dish. The fruit when eaten discolours the teeth and gums in the same manner as our own whinberry. The leaves are sometimes used in thatching temporary buildings, and in the making of rough hoods over canoes. They, however, are not durable, for when dry they break very easily and soon turn into dust. The wood is rarely used, as its resisting properties are but slight because, instead of drying and hardening like others, it soon turns into a damp mass of rot.

Caraná is a pretty, delicate palm, with spiny thorns on the trunk and leaves. Along with other kinds of palm it furnishes the forest workers with rough needles, and replaces the steel ones when these are unobtainable. When one travels through the forest paths it is a common occurrence to tread upon the fallen leaf of one of these trees, the sharp thorns of which, although the leaf may have been many months buried under a covering of earth and leaves, retain quite sufficient strength to penetrate a thin-soled shoe. They cause much inconvenience, as the points almost invariably break off in the flesh and are very hard to extract. The young inner leaves of this palm are not used as food as they are said to be poisonous.

The macujá (*Acirocomia lasiospatha*) is a very useful palm. It produces a hard yellow fruit, rich in oil, which is much eaten by the Indians.

Marajá and other bactris palms are thin, delicate, and of very pretty varieties. The fruits are small, some being red and others black, and are edible. In taste they are much like the burrs of the wild rose so common in English hedgerows.

The jupati has long feathery leaves growing at a height of about fifty feet. In some places they are so dense as to darken the forest with the shadow of their shaggy crowns.

Ubim (*Geonoma*) is another species of small palm found in very damp and low portions of the forest. Its wood or stem is rarely put to any useful purpose.

Jauri (*Astryocarium J.*) is still another of the spiny palms which provide substitutes for steel needles. The long thorns of this palm are exceedingly hard and dark in colour, having almost the appearance of jet.

Curuá is a large fern-like palm, which at its base produces a fruit or nut with a very hard shell. The nuts grow in large clusters, and are very much like small cocoanuts after the large fibrous outer covering has been removed. The kernel is in taste like cocoanut, but is much richer in fatty substance. This tree fern or palm is classified as *Attalea spectabilis*.

Although not strictly found wild in the forests the pupunha palm (*Guilelma speciosa*) is undoubtedly one of the most beneficial found there. It is sometimes encountered in large groves when it has been planted by Indians, who cultivate it for its rich and feeding fruits.

The palm grows to a height of about seventy feet, and is crowned by pretty feathery leaves. There seem to be several varieties, but the most common are those with spiny trunks and leaves, and another which has neither spines nor seeds within its fruits.

The fruits are conical and grow in clusters. In colour they range from pale yellow to deep red. The species, which has thorns upon bark and leaves, produces fruit that contains a small round seed or kernel. The spineless variety produces seedless fruits. It is said by the natives that this species is not sterile, but how far this is true I do not know; it is certain that they are produced by continually cutting away the needle-like spikes from the spiny stems. The fruits of both kinds are exceedingly rich and palatable. When cooked they taste something like a mealy toasted chestnut, and are very dry. They are much used at table in place of bread or potatoes, three or four being very satisfying, while a dish of them, without any adjunct, will make a good meal. Dogs devour them greedily, and in many Indian regions are maintained almost exclusively on this fruit. The fruits are also crushed and made into a thick paste or pulp, which, when mixed with water and allowed to ferment, makes a good native beer. The beverage is much used by the Indians in their fiestas.

The wood of the pupunha is very hard and takes a high polish, and although producing such an excellent fruit it is often cut down in order to use the wood. The young inner shoots make fine salad, which is very tasty, not unlike celery, and with a nutty flavour.

The climbing palms (*Desmoncus*), known to Brazilians as jacitára, are to be found almost everywhere, and are wonderfully pretty. Almost every big tree has some variety clinging to its bark, and when they are in fruit the small clusters of berries make pleasing spots of colour against the green leaves.

The palms mentioned in this chapter are only the more prominent ones, but the forests almost everywhere are full of small varieties of palms, tree-ferns, etc., which to specify would take up a space much larger than that occupied by the whole of this book, while their classifying and enumeration would probably be a botanist's life work.

CHAPTER XXII

A FEW REMARKS FOR THE TRAVELLER

IN view of the increasing interest shown in the little-known parts of the Amazon and its tributaries, it may be well to give to those interested a few rules to guide them regarding the modes of travelling in the rivers.

Visitors desirous of entering the Amazon from Europe can travel by the boats of the Booth S.S. Company, which sail from Liverpool every ten days to Para and Manaos direct, and if desirous of making Iquitos their destination can avail themselves of the boats of the Amazon Steamship Navigation Company, at either Para or Manaos. The Booth S.S. Company have also monthly sailings from these places to Iquitos, but it is preferable to travel on the river steamers, although one meets with strange and sometimes unpalatable foods.

The advantages of travelling on the local boats outweigh minor inconveniences, such as the poor table, the swarms of mosquitoes, the frequent delays, etc., for the opportunities of studying the country and its people are much augmented.

The steamers of the Booth S.S. Company occupy very few days in the journey from Para to Manaos, and thence to Iquitos, stopping only at the two frontier posts of Tabatinga and Leticia, whereas the local steamers call at almost every house of any importance *en route*. When these stops occur the passenger has an opportunity of going ashore for a few moments, when he can note and compare the huts and houses and his impressions in general. Most local steamers when on the Iquitos run call at Remate de Males on the River Javary, about eighty miles from its mouth.

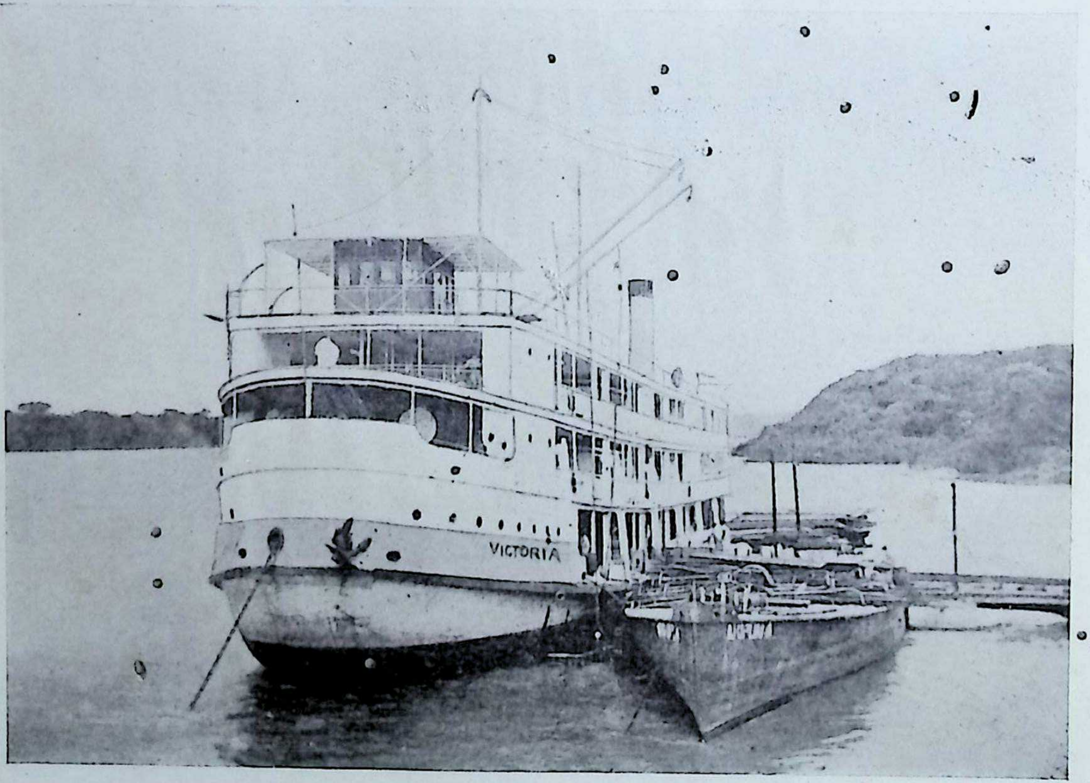
Here, and at other villages or small towns *en route*, one can see the manner of carrying on trade, and note the characteristics of the traders and the miserable conditions of the labourer, fisherman, and rubber gatherer.

It is not, however, until one leaves the rivers navigated by mechanically propelled boats, that one really appreciates the forests, the climate, and the richness of nature in general.

The towns on the rivers traversed by steamers are very easy of access, except the more secluded ones, which for a few weeks during the dry season are hard to reach by steamer, but can always be reached in small boats and canoes.

The River Madeira is accessible at all seasons of the year as far as the starting-point of the railway which terminates at the Bolivian frontier, close to the mouth of the Mamore. Here other small steamers and launches carry the traveller to the Bolivian town of Trinidad, and within easy distance of Santa Cruz. From here he can easily travel across country by good roads to La Paz, or, in fact, any other part of the republic.

If he is desirous of visiting the rivers Beni, Madre de Dios, and their tributaries, he can leave the train at a point known as Villa Murtinho and cross to the Bolivian side of the river. Here at the mouth of the Beni is the village of Villa Bella, from whence there is a regular service of motor-boats and launches to the first cataract, Cachuela Esperanza, where he will have to disembark and take passage on a river steamer from the head of the falls.



NEW TYPE OF RIVER STEAMER OF THE AMAZON STEAMSHIP COMPANY

A regular service is maintained from here to the higher waters, such as the rivers Orton, Tahuamano, or Cahumari.

Travelling via the River Manu or Madre de Dios, the tourist may reach the Peruvian interior via Puerto Maldonado, traversing the agricultural districts owned by the Peruvian Corporation, where most of the labour is Japanese, and, by easy stages, through charming and bountiful districts, can decide at his leisure which of the almost innumerable roads he cares to take.

If he is desirous of traversing Bolivia, he may take the small town of Rurrenabague as his starting-point, and travel by the mail road to Cochabamba and La Paz, or across country to the head-waters of the Purus and the centre of the forests.

Travellers visiting the South American interior require very little in the way of outfit. Loose-fitting clothes and caps of strong khaki drill are excellent; heavy boots in the forests are a burden. Good woollen shirts and hose are very useful, the latter in particular, as they help a great deal in protecting one from thorns which penetrate the footwear. The most convenient shoes for use in South American forests are made of canvas, with soles of plaited rope or cotton. Their thickness causes them to act as cushions, and owing to their lightness one does not so easily tire. They, however, do not prevent one's feet from getting wet, but this is a secondary consideration in the bush, where one meets with water and swamp every few miles. They have a great advantage over leather footwear, for they are easily cleaned, and all mud or earth adhering to them may be washed off without removing them from the feet. When free of mud and thoroughly soaked they are a great assistance where streams have to be crossed by rough bridges, consisting mostly of a single fallen tree. These, when much traversed, become exceedingly slippery and dangerous, and no person wearing ordinary leather footwear could cross them without removing his shoes. The "alpargata," however, grips the wood and assures a good foothold, preventing, or at least minimizing, falls and other accidents.

While one is in the bush proper, two complete changes of clothing are all that are necessary, the one not in use being carried in a large watertight bag made of thin cotton and covered with crude rubber. Boxes or trunks of any description are best left at some large town, or forwarded to the traveller's destination by easier routes.

Travelling by canoe or through the forests a small pocket filter, flint and steel, hunting-knife, fish-hooks, etc., must be carried. As armament the most convenient is the old style cal. .44 Winchester muzzle-loading shot-gun, waterproof percussion caps, and a .32 or .38 ordinary revolver such as Smith Wesson's or other simple make. Automatic pistols, rifles, and other modern firearms are not convenient as great difficulty is met with in obtaining supplies of ammunition for them, while the idea of carrying large quantities is not to be entertained owing to the smallness of canoes and the scarcity of bearers.

It must be remembered that when one leaves the limits of river steamboat navigation the only means of getting about the country are the canoe and one's own limbs. Travelling is extremely difficult, and before visitors attempt to spend a few months in the bush they must assure themselves that they are possessed of good temper, enormous powers of resistance, and an object in view for which they are prepared to sacrifice almost everything.

Money or one's own importance is of very little value, but a fair share of good-fellowship and powers of persuasion are of immense advantage in dealing with the natives when one is on long journeys by forest or river.

Expeditions have been organized at various times replete with almost every modern convenience, but of what service can a motor-boat be in regions where oil is not available? Not only this, but if a mechanically propelled boat be reserved for use after one leaves the steamer at the limits of steam navigation the cost of carrying it is prohibitive, and there is every likelihood that after a very few days a river boat would be almost useless from climatic conditions, ill-treatment, and rough usage, or even malice, from the opposition which one would meet with almost everywhere, on account of the great dread of the conditions existing in the remote regions of the rubber-collecting districts.

The only practical way to study the forests is to do so unostentatiously, to give very little satisfaction to questioners, and by every means possible to evade those who would be most interested in one's business.

Frankness in South America is as great a disadvantage as it is a desirability among ourselves. In certain parts of the worst districts a most charming frankness is encountered by new arrivals, but it is a fact that must be carefully remembered that this frankness is the most cruel form of deceit, for it is absolutely false. Travellers are entertained and flattered only until their reserve is penetrated and their purposes known, to the advantage of the South American and the confounding of the traveller in search of knowledge.

APPENDIX

Cost of Living in Amazon Rivers compared

	Pará.	*Manaos.*	*Iquitos.*	*Riberalta.*
Hotels, per day,	10/– to £1.	10/– to £1	12/– to 25/–	£1
Beef . .	1/9 lb.	2/– lb.	Fluctuates.	
Mutton . .	Very rare and expensive.			
Pork . .	Cheap and very poor.			
Veal . .	2/6 to 4/–		Unknown.	
Chickens .	12/6 to £1	15/– to 25/–	Fluctuate.	
Ducks . .	12/6 to £1	12/6 to £1	Very rare.	
Turkeys .	15/– to 25/–	15/– to 25/–	”	
Eggs . .	4d. each.	6d. each.	4d. to 8d. each.	
Milk . .	Cheap.	1/3 pint.	2/– pint.	
Butter . .	5/– lb.	5/– lb.	6/– lb., tinned.	
Lard . .	1/10 lb.	2/3 lb.	—	
Dried Meat .	1/3 lb.	1/6 lb.	—	
Sugar . .	Dependent upon supplies.		Cheap.	
Beer . .	2/6 to 3/6 bott.	3/– to 4/– bott.	—	
Port . .	12/6 to £1	12/6 to £1	—	
Spirits . .	12/6 to £1	12/6 to £1	—	
Clothing .	Twice or three times European prices.			
Rents . .	” ” ” ”			
Washing .	Very expensive and difficult to get.			

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